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ESSAYS
SPECULATIVE AND SUGGESTIVE.

ESSAYS

SPECULATIVE AND SUGGESTIVE.

BY
JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.
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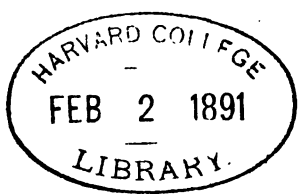
εὐρετικὸν εἶναι φασὶ τὴν ἐρημίαν.

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TO
MISS MARGOT TENNANT,
IN MEMORY
OF LONG DARK WINTER NIGHTS
AT DAVOS,
MADE LUMINOUS
BY WITTY CONVERSATION.

PREFACE.

THE epithets, speculative and suggestive, have not been given to these Essays without due consideration. Written in the isolation of this Alpine retreat, they express the opinions and surmisings of one who long has watched in solitude, "as from a ruined tower," the world of thought, and circumstance, and action. To such an one it may, perhaps, be pardoned if he prove a trifle whimsical in speculation and fantastic in suggestion. I am aware that the first, second, and sixteenth Essays will be judged, by many who may read them, to exceed the bounds of that critical common-sense which is recommended in the third. Possibly my prolonged seclusion from populous cities and the society of intellectual equals—a seclusion which has lasted now, with short and occasional interruptions, through twelve years—the renunciation of

ambitious aims and active interests implied in such a life, and the peculiar influences to which those are subjected who spend a seven months' winter, year after year, among white snow-drifts and inhospitable, storm-swept mountains, have bred in me a mystical habit of regarding man's relation to the universe. In these conditions, and forced by broken health to meditate upon the problem of approaching death, a student comes insensibly to think more of nature and the world, less of humanity and self, than when he is swimming down the stream of competitive existence. The particular loses importance in his range of vision. The universal, little understood, but powerfully felt, assumes ascendancy over his imagination. He is like one who surveys the world of things from a solitary mountain peak or from the centre of a boundless desert. Faiths spring up in him which have closer analogy with the first intuitions of primitive races than with the logical and analytical systems of reasoned thought. Such as they are, these penetrate his mind, and give peculiar tone to all his utterances. The point of view from which many of the more critical Essays in this collection have been written would

not be apparent without a frank expression of the speculative thoughts that underlie them. I have, therefore, not shrunk from committing myself to theories and surmises which are advanced in no dogmatic spirit. To suggest ideas, to stimulate reflection, is the object of a book like this. At the same time, were I asked in what order these Essays ought to be studied, I should recommend most people to leave "The Philosophy of Evolution" unread, until one or another of the following articles aroused in them some curiosity about the author's views upon religion and man's relation to the universe.

DAVOS PLATZ,
Feb. 24th, 1890.

N.B.—Seven of the following Essays have appeared, in whole or part, in *The Fortnightly Review*, one in *Time*, and one in *The Century Guild Hobby-Horse*. One has been extracted from a paper previously published in my own "Italian Byways." All these have been re-written to a large extent. The remaining ten, together with the Appendices, are new, and come before the public for the first time now.

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ESSAYS

SPECULATIVE AND SUGGESTIVE.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EVOLUTION.

To discuss God apart from Nature is both difficult and perilous ; it is as if we separated the soul from the body. We know the soul only through the body, and God only through Nature. Hence the absurdity, as it appears to me, of accusing those of absurdity who philosophically have united God with the world. For everything which exists necessarily pertains to the essence of God ; therefore God is the one Being whose existence includes all things.—*GOETHE* (*circa 1770*), *translated by G. R. Lewes.*

I.

IF we attempt to seize the main fact in the intellectual development of the last half-century, we shall find that this may be described as the triumph of the scientific method in relation to all man's thought about the universe. We have gained our present standing-point by a long process of experimental and philosophical labour, which has been carried on through three centuries in Europe, and which culminated recently in the hypothesis of evolution.

This hypothesis cannot be separated from those sciences which demonstrate the cosmic unity, analyse the elements of matter, investigate the origins of life upon our earth, and explore the obscure stages of primitive human history. It cannot be dissociated from those metaphysical speculations regarding man's relation to the world which received poetic utterance from Bruno and Goethe, and found logical expression in the systems of *a priori* thinkers like Hegel.

Evolution, in the widest sense of the term, has to be viewed as a generalisation which combines the data of previous scientific and philosophical thought in a new conception of the universe. Like all such generalisations, it is hypothetical, provisional. Though it has received valuable inductive and experimental support in the region of biology, it does not rest upon the same foundation as Newton's law or as the law of the Conservation of Energy. It must rather be regarded as a comprehensive scheme of thought, inviting demonstration, stimulating discovery, and capable of manifold application.

Least of all does Evolution, as its name and as its principles imply, claim for itself finality. Its adaptation, however, to the present conditions of the human mind is proved by the rapidity with which it is transforming every department of speculation.

In the following pages it will be my object to show reason why the Philosophy of Evolution, instead of crushing the aspirations of humanity and reducing our conceptions of the world to chaos, may be expected to reanimate religion and to restore spirituality to the universe. 2

II.

This idea is undoubtedly the most potent which has entered the sphere of human thought since Copernicus published his heliocentric theory of the Solar System. When we inquire into the nature of religions, we shall find that they are all of them at root attempts to account for the universe, and to define man's place in the sphere of things. This being the case, it follows that every new cosmological idea, every fresh hypothesis regarding the beginning of the world and man, every alteration in the theory of Nature, will induce changes in the current systems of theology, metaphysics, morals. Now the mythological elements of Christianity took shape in the intellects of people who conceived our earth to be the centre of the universe; who were accustomed to believe that God made the sun and moon and stars to shed light on us; and who fancied that the divine purpose in creating nature was to form a dwelling-place for man. The dogmatic elements of historical Christianity in like manner assumed

their fixity by slow degrees under the dominance of Ptolemy's geocentric system of astronomy, and in harmony with a metaphysic which accepted that view of the universe. The discovery, published by Copernicus in 1543, by simply shifting the position of our globe in space, shook the ponderous fabric of scholastic theology to its foundations. The deductions made from his discovery by subsequent thinkers still more seriously compromised a large part of that edifice. The earth appeared not merely as a satellite of the sun; but the sun himself, with all his court of planets, took rank as only one among innumerable sidereal companies. Space spread into infinity. Up and down, heaven above and hell beneath, were now phrases of symbolical or metaphorical significance only. It was no longer possible to imagine that the celestial bodies had been created in order to give light by day and night. Man's station of eminence in the kosmos ceased to seem manifest. It became difficult to take the scheme of salvation, God's sacrifice of himself in the Second Person of the Trinity for the advantage of a race located on a third-rate planet, literally. Some mythical parts of the religion, which had previously been held as facts, were immediately changed into allegories. For instance, the ascension of Jesus from the mountain lost its value as an historical event when the brazen vault of

heaven, or the crystal sphere on the outer surface of which God sat, had been annihilated; when there was no more up or down, and when a body lifted into ether would obey the same laws of attraction as a meteoric stone.

The Copernican discovery very materially influenced Christian dogma and mythology by thus converting at a stroke what had been previously accepted as a matter of literal and historical fact into symbol, allegory, metaphor. It humbled human pride, and destroyed the overweening sense of man's importance in the universe. The nature of this revolution in astronomy made it of necessity destructive to the external coatings and integuments of religion. At the same time, it stimulated the growth of a new metaphysic, the first manifestations of which we owe to Bruno, and which was destined to react upon theology through the idealistic speculations of the last two centuries.

III.

The disintegration of those factors which are merely temporal, and doomed to dissolution, in Christianity, has been advancing so rapidly, through the application of various critical methods and the growth of sciences, that little of a purely destructive influence was to be expected from the theory of Evolution. Some points, however, may arrest attention.

Preceded by geology and primitive anthropology, Evolution dealt a death-blow at the assumptions of human self-conceit. We have accepted the probability of man's development from less highly organised types of animal life with tolerable good-humour, after a certain amount of rebellious disgust. The study of pre-historical humanity, together with the suggestions of the Evolution hypothesis, render any doctrine of a Fall more and more untenable. Instead of Paradise, and man's sudden lapse from primal innocence, we are now convinced that history implies a slow and toilsome upward effort on the part of our ancestors from the outset.

Preceded, in like manner, by the demonstrated theories of Conservation and Correlation of Energies, Evolution destroyed the old conception of miraculous occurrences. A miracle, a freak of power, is no longer conceivable in Nature; and if Lazarus were raised from the dead before our eyes, we should first ascertain the fact, and next proceed to investigate the law of the phenomenon. Evolution, in the last place, superseded scholastic teleology by more rational notions of order. The habit of mind which recognised particular design and providential interference in special adaptations of living creatures to their environment, has been superseded by what may be termed a consistently biological view of the universe. The whole scheme

of things is now regarded as a single organism, advancing methodically through stages of its growth in obedience to inevitable laws of self-expansion. This does not dispel the mystery which surrounds life. It does not pretend, when rightly understood, to give a final or sufficient explanation of Being. Nor, again, does it yield the world to chance, or remove the necessity by which we postulate the priority of thought, intention, spirit, to all manifestations of material existence. But it compels us to regard this form-giving spiritual potency as inherent in the organism : as the law of its life, not as the legislation of some power extraneous to it. In another very important point Evolution has reacted destructively on popular Christianity. By penetrating our minds with the conviction that all things are in process, that the whole universe is literally in perpetual *Becoming*, it has rendered it impossible for us to believe that any one creed or set of opinions possesses finality. Religions, like all things that are ours and human, have their day of declension ; nor can Christianity form an exception to the universal rule. What is perishable in its earthly historical manifestation must be eliminated ; and the permanent spirit by which it is animated, the truth it reveals, will be absorbed into the structure of creeds destined successively to supersede it and be superseded.

IV.

The fundamental conception which underlies the Evolutionary method of thought is that all things in the universe exist in process. No other system has so vigorously enforced the truth that it is impossible to isolate phenomena from their antecedents and their consequents. No other system has given the same importance to apparently insignificant details and to apparently monstrous divergences from normal types, in so far as such details supply links in the sequence of development, or such divergences can be used to illustrate the growth of organism. It follows that the line of thought which we call Evolutionary infuses new vitality into history, into every study of the past, and into all branches of criticism. At the present moment I wish to contribute some considerations regarding the most obvious ways of applying it to the history of art and literature—not because this is a matter of first importance, but because I speak with firm personal conviction on the topic.

When I was a young man, in the sixties, I remember that we students of European culture had to choose between connoisseurs and metaphysicians for our guides. On the one hand were the people who praised the “Correggiosity of Correggio,” or “swore by Perugino,” or promulgated the “preciousness of Fra Angelico,” as

though Correggio, Perugino, and the Dominican painter of San Marco were respectively descended full-formed from the skies to instruct an unenlightened world. Each connoisseur sailed under his self-chosen flag, proclaimed his own proclivities, and preached the gospel of his particular taste. There were not wanting even folk who pinned their faith to Sir Joshua and the Caracci. Caprice on this side governed judgment; and what I have stated with regard to figurative art was no less true of poetry and literature. There seemed to be no light or leading in the chaos of opinion. On the other hand were ranged the formal theorists, who constructed a scheme of art upon subjective principles. They bade us direct our minds to the idea, the *Begriff* of art; and having thence obtained a concept, we were invited to reject as valueless whatever would not square with the logical formula.

Between these opposed teachers, the pure connoisseurs and the pure metaphysicians, Goethe emerged like a steady guiding star. His felicitous summary of criticism, "Im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen, resolut zu leben" (To live resolutely in the whole, the good, the beautiful), came like a deliverance. Instinctively we felt that the central point for us, if we would erect criticism into a science, was not caprice, not personal proclivity, not particular taste, but a steady comprehension

of the whole. How to grasp the whole, how to reach a point of view from which all manifestations of the human mind should appear as correlated, should fall into their proper places as parts of a complex organism, remained the difficulty.

Honour should here be rendered to M. Taine, who was among the first to apply natural physiological principles to the study of what is understood as culture. His method drew attention to the *milieu*, the ethnological conditions, the climatic and social environments, which modify each particular product of human genius in art and literature. He was on the right track; but there remained something stiff and formal, a something inconsistent with the subtlety of Nature, in his philosophy of culture. In particular, it did not make sufficient allowances for the resistance which the individual offers to his *milieu*, for the emergence in him of specific strains of atavism, and for the peculiar phenomena of mental hybrids.

Just then Darwin's and Spencer's publication of the Evolution theory made its decisive impact on the mind of Europe. We felt that here was the right way toward living and thinking in the whole. The steady determination to regard all subjects of inquiry from the point of view of development delivered criticism from the caprice of connoisseurship and the whims of dilettantism. It superseded the attractive but too often vaporous

generalisations of the logician by a sound method of analysis. It lent the charm of biography or narrative to what had previously seemed so dull and lifeless—the history of art or letters. Illuminated by this idea, every stage in the progress of culture acquired significance. The origins and incunabula of art, viewed in their relation to its further growth, ceased to have a merely antiquarian interest. Periods of decadence were explicable and intelligible on the principle that every organism, expanding from the germ, passing through adolescence to maturity, is bound at last to exhaust its motive force and perish by exaggerating qualities implicit in the mature type. Hybrids, in like manner, obtained a fresh instructiveness and value for students of the unmixed species.

It might perhaps be objected that I am claiming too much for the scientific impulse of the last half-century. Have not all histories, it will be said, at all periods of the world, been written in this way? Has not all criticism proceeded upon this method? I would recommend those who ask these questions to peruse Tiraboschi's "*Storia della Letteratura Italiana*," one of the most solid and valuable monuments of erudition; or if that is requiring too much from human patience, let them take up Hallam's "*Literature of Europe*." Next I would point to the magnificent criticism

in all parts instinct with genius, which our age owes to Mr. Ruskin. I think it will be found that neither in Tiraboschi's conscientious and exhaustive record of his nation's culture, nor in Mr. Ruskin's luminous discourse upon the principles of art and the merits or demerits of particular artists, does the specific note which marks the Evolutionist appear. The mind of neither of these men is directed to the study of a *process* in the past. They do not set themselves to tracing and explaining what Goethe and Oken termed the *morphology* of their subject. I do not mean to assert that they must be wrong, and that Evolutionary historians and critics must be right. My purpose is to insist upon an important difference.

I admit that there is a danger in the exclusive application of the Evolutionary method, against which both historians and critics must be upon their guard. Absorption in the process we are studying may blunt our sensibility to relative degrees of moral and artistic excellence in the work we have to estimate. We may come to think that the demonstration of development is all that is required of us; whereas it is only the beginning of our task, the clue that guides us through the labyrinth of research, the principle which gives coherence to our exposition. We may be so interested, for example, in analysing how the dying tree of Italian painting put forth its final shoot

in the Bolognese school, that we shall not express a due sense of the relative and intrinsic inferiority of the pictures produced in that decadent age. There is, I repeat, a danger of sacrificing individuality and blunting the edge of critical judgment if we attempt to live too resolutely in the whole. But, fortunately, all the vices, foibles, and passions of human nature tend in quite the opposite direction. Caprice and whim and partiality do not need to be encouraged. We run but little risk of exchanging these congenital defects for rigid method and relentless logic. Again, there is no reason why students who add interest to their labours by the inspiration of this idea—an idea which infuses life into every matter of inquiry—should therefore lose their faculty of judgment. He must be singularly stupid who does not perceive the immeasurable distance between Greene and Shakespeare, Shakespeare and Davenant, because he has demonstrated that Greene was necessary to the evolution of Shakespeare, and that Davenant was his inevitable successor. Such a man, if he writes a dull book under the influence of Evolutionary ideas, would assuredly have written a still duller one without them.

V.

I pass now to that more difficult and delicate portion of my theme which concerns the higher

region of religion, metaphysic, and morality. That remoulding and recasting process, which is for ever going forward in the intellectual no less than the corporeal organism, has been committed, for this century at least, to the custody of what is roughly termed Science.

The tendency of scientific ideas, in so far as these are remoulding thought in those high regions, is to spiritualise religion, to dissipate the materialistic associations which environ theology in its mythological stages, and to emancipate the individual from egotism in the presence of that universal Being of which he is a part, and to the manifestation of which he contributes.

— When Cleanthes, the Stoic, wrote the prayer which I will presently translate, he projected a religion commensurate with modern Science. “Lead Thou me, Zeus,” he prayed, “and thou world’s Law, whithersoever I am by you appointed to go; for I will follow unreluctant; and yet should I refuse, through evilness (or cowardice) up-grown in me, none the less I shall surely follow.”*

— We cannot get beyond that: we need not seek to do so; for this prayer is compatible with every creed, and it contains the essence of absolute self-dedication.

* In another place Cleanthes declares that there is no higher guerdon for gods or mortals than to sing the praises of the universal Law—*κοινὸν αἰὲ νόμον ἐν δίκῃ ὑμνεῖν*.

By convincing us that the universe is one homogeneous whole, in which nothing can be lost and unaccounted for, through which there runs a continuity of energising forces, and of which we are indisputably conscious members, Science has lent deeper meaning to the Stoic prayer. But it has not, on that account, eliminated the conception of a Deity or effaced the noble humanities secured for us by many centuries of Christian faith. It cannot be too emphatically insisted on that much-dreaded Darwinism leaves the theological belief in a Divine Being untouched. God is not less God, nor is creative energy less creative, because we are led to suppose that a lengthy instead of a sudden method was employed in the production of the Kosmos.

VI.

The conceptions of God and Law tend to coalescence in the scientific theory of the universe. In other words, spirituality is restored to Nature, which comes to be regarded as a manifestation of infinite vitality. The Fathers of the Christian Churches, battling with corrupt Paganism, striving valiantly to secure monotheistic principles of theology, basing conduct upon hopes and terrors in the world beyond the grave, effected an artificial separation of man from Nature. They banned the logical and simple recognition of man's integration with the Kosmos, upon which the elder religions

rested. Nature for many centuries was regarded as the evil thing, the contrary of Spirit. Science, which grew up in this uncongenial atmosphere, accepted the separation from the outset, and went on studying Nature as though it were external to the human soul. But this alienation of man from the surrounding universe, which constitutes him, and which he helps to constitute, can no longer be maintained. We must return with fuller knowledge to something like the earlier, more instinctive faith about the world, whereof ourselves, body and spirit, are part. And nothing seems more evident than that we are being led back to this point by the hand of Science, enemy as she is supposed to be of poetry, of mysticism, of spiritual contemplation.

The ground for this apparent paradox may thus be stated. Science establishes the unity of the Kosmos, together with the exact correspondence and correlation of its parts. But when we begin to regard this unity with eyes from which the scales of Christian antagonism have fallen, we discover that we cannot think of it except as spiritual. The one only thing we can be said to know and to be sure of, is the paramount importance in ourselves of mind. *Cogito, ergo sum*, as the starting-point for speculation, may sound an antiquated formula, yet it contains incontestable truth, which is hourly verified by experience, and only too pompously proclaimed by ontologists. If, then, we are mind, and nothing in the last

resort but mind, logic compels us to expect mind in that of which we are an integrating element, and from the total complex of which we cannot be dissevered. The last ambitious system of constructive metaphysics, that of Hegel, made the most of this position. But Hegel overstrained the point when he identified the world-mind with the human mind. His elaborate reasoning from subjective data has been rejected by the common sense of generations trained in the exploration of the actual universe. Man's thought does not make the world, into which man entered at a comparatively recent date, and on a relatively minor planet. Quite independent of his thought, the heavens, the earth, the rocks, the rivers, the forests, flowers, and animals, and birds, of which he obtains cognisance through his five senses, would enjoy their own existence. Most of them were prior to him in time, and it is only the vanity of egotism which makes him represent his thought as necessary to their being. The truth, however, remains that man is the highest expression of life upon this globe, and that his mind is the highest expression of his being.* What we know about the world

* The argument might be condensed here into a single sentence: "The truth, however, remains that we are what we are through thought; and we may reasonably infer that this is not limited to our condition, but that mind penetrates and animates all existence, forming the essential part of that which was, and is, and is to be."

is in our thought. For us, then, human thought is the world; but only for us. Our mind is not co-extensive with the universe; yet we may reasonably infer from its presence in ourselves that there is mind in the universe below us and above us. We are compelled to hypothesise an Universal Mind because of the manifest fact that we help to constitute the universe, which was, and is, and will be before, around, and after our phenomenal existence. Evolution, admitting no break of continuity in the universe, silently forces us to this conclusion; and it is only the attitude still maintained, in form at least, by Christianity towards Nature, which prevents our recognising the Spirit immanent and everywhere.

VII.

After speaking of a cosmic mind, it is of much importance to define what we mean by mind. To human beings mind appears in the form of consciousness and thinking. Thought is the highest manifestation of our consciousness, graduated upwards from rudimentary sensitivenesses and sensations, through perceptions, instincts stereotyped in what may be termed organic habits, states of memory, and so forth, into its final ratiocinative stage. At that point it eludes our observation, just as it eludes us, at the other end of the scale, in stages where we are inclined to doubt the

existence of consciousness at all. We have sufficient proof that some of our primitive sensibilities, the lowest chords of consciousness in us, are shared by men with the coarsest types of animals, and even with plants. Among these may be reckoned muscular contractibility, and the faculty of alimentation. In like manner, many of our perceptions, instincts, and rougher processes of reasoning are shared by men with brutes. Memory, dreaming, inference, even a simple power of generalisation, are possessed by the animals nearest to humanity in organic development. It is, therefore, by no means clear that mind in all its phenomenal manifestations, inferior or superior to man's, should be ratiocinative. That, indeed, is the differentia of mind in our own stage of being. Yet we believe that humanity forms the climax of a series which started from simple animated cells. And having admitted that there is no abrupt breakage between these cells and us in the long chain of organised existence, how can we refuse mind in its simpler form to those simpler organisations? It may even be queried whether our complex mode of being does not render us incapable of appreciating the degrees of consciousness in things lower than ourselves. Because attention is not roused in us by the peristaltic action, it does not follow that ascidians, who are all stomach, have not an acute consciousness of this, their principal

activity. On the other hand, analogy leads us to believe that man is not the final product of Nature. Consequently we are justified in entertaining the belief that existences, higher in the scale of being, may be endowed with intellects more fully organised than ours. Such existences, possibly, transcend the ratiocinative stage of mind. Similar reasoning may be applied to what we call the inorganic realm. We can only seize form by thought, by mind, by intellect. Shall we not then be bold enough to say that all form—form in molecules, in crystals, in planetary systems, in the undulations of light and sound—is fundamentally a mode of mind? To call form merely a mode of matter loses meaning when we have abandoned the abrupt division between man and the rest of the animal and vegetable world. It is true that the transition from inorganic to organic phenomena has not yet been seized. But the doctrine of continuity in Nature ought to render us very doubtful as to the old-fashioned dichotomy, which places an impassable barrier between them. So long as mind was regarded as extraneous to Nature, as a prerogative given to man alone by God, the omnipresence of mind in every particle of the phenomenal universe was not apparent. External Nature could be regarded as a mechanical contrivance under those conditions of belief. Science has forced us to abandon this position.

At the same time, the continual experience of mind within ourselves precludes a gross irrational materialism. The fact that we merely know mind in its human differentia, and can form no conception at present of its manifestations in other stages of being, is plainly one of our abiding disabilities—the incapacity under which we suffer of transcending our own sphere. Yet I have already pointed out that the analysis of mind in man proves that intellect is only the highest function, within our range of vision, to which successive stages of vital organism ascend by complication of structure and development of consciousness.

We may approach this problem of the universal mind upon another path, following the indications suggested by the Correlation of Forces.

Mind appears to us human beings as the final synthesis of biological functions, attaining to self-consciousness by a gradual progression from the simplest forms of animated things to the most complex organism known to us—Man.

If we are serious Evolutionists—that is to say, if we refuse to recognise a breakage in the sequence which connects man with the lowest types of life upon the planet, and if we repudiate the hypothesis of special creation to account for the phenomenon which we term mind in its final elaboration known to us—then we are forced to admit that inorganic Nature is implicated in the

process of mental development. We may not indeed be able at present to demonstrate the transition from inorganic to organic modes of the world-substance; but we are brought to the following dilemma: either we must postulate the evolution of life and mind out of primordial inorganic elements, or we must postulate a special act of creation whereby the rudiments of mind were communicated together with life to the earliest organised beings. Accepting the latter alternative, we cease to be Evolutionists; for we have conceded creative interference at one moment of the universal sequence, which is tantamount to abandoning the main point of Evolutionary philosophy. Accepting the former alternative, and remaining Evolutionists, we are driven to the conclusion that mind was potentially present in the primordial elements out of which life, and man, as the crown of zoological life upon this globe, emerged.

This conclusion, to which the Evolutionist is driven, does not imply that mind, regarded as the final synthesis of biological functions in man, was not something apparently and qualitatively different in the inorganic world—as different, for example, to our senses and our intelligence as heat is from motion.

We are aware of mind as intelligence. We do not discover any sign of intelligence in the in-

organic world. Yet we are compelled by Evolution to conceive of intelligence as the final outcome of vital processes which started from an inorganic basis.

When we apply the analogy of the Correlation of Forces to this problem, we may surmise that what appears as intelligence in the biological series was formerly the same power existing under another manifestation in the inorganic series, just as heat is a condition of motion. This would save us from assuming a break in the evolutionary process, and would enable us to comprehend how inorganic things seem irreconcilably alien to organic things when viewed from our present point of vision. In other words, the common substance of the world would now be thought of, in successive moments of its evolution, first as endowed with the capacity of form, next as endowed with the capacity of life and progressive consciousness in addition to form.

Thus, instead of destroying the belief that mind constitutes the whole universe, which we know alone through mind, the analogy of the Correlation of Forces helps us to conceive why mind appears to us at one period as inorganic form, and at the next period as organised vitality. We derive from it some ground for expecting that the passage of inorganic into organic modes of the world-stuff will eventually be regarded in the same

way as the metamorphosis of heat into motion is now conceived. Whether we choose to call that world-stuff by the name of Spirit or Matter signifies nothing ; for these names are merely symbols, like the x and y of Algebra.

VIII.

Having come into being, as I said, under the dominance of theological ideas about the relation of the human soul to God and the world, Science has hitherto been of necessity positive and materialistic. The most earnest inquirers could not at once emancipate themselves from prejudices for or against the exclusive theories of spiritualism formulated by the Churches. Christian dogmatists abruptly divided the soul from Nature, regarded the universe as a machine created by a God external to it, and laid this earth, our dwelling-place, under the curse of sin and evil. Men of science dealt accordingly with Nature as something extraneous, outside the mind ; as the object of inquiry, but not at the same time as the subject of the intellect that inquires. The wisest forbore from uttering opinions upon man's relation to the world ; and this abstention, seeing that the word God was rarely found upon their pages, seeing that they did not need "that hypothesis of Deity," gained for them the reputation of atheists with the vulgar. Christianity itself was responsible for

their position ; but the world lost nothing by the positive and neutral spirit in which they had to work. On the contrary, it gained considerably ; for, without mystical or theological bias, they have gradually been bringing home to our intelligence more and more convincingly the truth that we are part of Nature ; and if in a true sense part, then the truest part of us, ourselves, our consciousness, our thought, our emotion, must be part of Nature ; and Nature everywhere, and in all her parts, must contain what corresponds to our spiritual essence. In this way Science, while establishing Law, has prepared the way for the identification of Law with God. I am far from asserting that any disciples of Science at the present moment have drawn this corollary from her teaching ; what I want to indicate is the inevitable point of contact between Science and Religion.

Finding thought to be the very essence of man considered as a natural product, we are compelled to believe that there is thought, implicit or explicit, in all the products which compose this universe. Nothing can be clearer, as the result of three centuries of scientific industry, than that there is neither loss of elements nor abrupt separation of species in the Kosmos, but that the whole is wrought of the same ground materials and evolved in its multiplicity of forms out of the same fundamental constituents. If

then we discover thought in man upon one plane of this immense development, how can we deny it to existences on other planes? How can we conceive that the primitive energies out of which the whole proceeded were not conscious or pregnant with consciousness? If mind is our sole reality and self, is it not the sole reality and self of all? Must we not maintain that, the universe being in one rhythm, things less highly organised than man possess consciousness, in the degrees of their descent less acute than man's? Must we not also surmise that ascending scales of existences more highly organised, of whom we are at present ignorant, are endowed with consciousness superior to man's? Paradoxical as this may seem, it is not incredible that the globe on which we live is more conscious of itself than we are of ourselves; and that the cells which compose our corporeal frame are gifted with a separate consciousness of a simpler kind than ours.

In this speculation of the universe, whether we advance toward the verge of mysticism or abide within the bounds of reverent abstention from such excursions, law—the law of the world's life—appears as God, brought nearer to experience, the object of obedience, the ever-present source of quickening enthusiasm. To this power, in whom we live and move and have our being, in whom the infinitely great and infinitely small

alike exist, we commit ourselves with the assurance that self, purged of egotism, is seeking its own best through dedication. We do not ask for crowns and thrones in the next world; we do not bargain for compensation which shall make earth's trials insignificant. Face to face with death, even the death of those whose love was unspeakably precious, we do not passionately demand again our darlings, or cling with tremulous persistence to the promise of immortality. Now, as formerly, the continuance of the individual after death remains a matter for hope and faith. Science as yet can neither affirm nor deny the life beyond the grave; but it teaches us that it is dangerous to appeal to personal desires upon this topic, and that St. Paul's audacious challenge, "If Christ be not risen, then are we of all men most wretched," belonged to a past stage of religious development. The confidence it inculcates is that nothing can come amiss to those who have brought their wills and wishes into accord with universal order. This will be stigmatised as optimism, I am well aware. It is certainly the antithesis of that puny pessimism which forms a marked sign of intellectual enfeeblement in the younger schools of German thought. To the pessimist we say—

"Thou art sick of self-love, Malvolio,
And taste with a distempered appetite."

It is not my present business to deal with pessimism, however, but to seek out how the scientific spirit is remoulding religion. Religion has been always optimistic; and whatever science is, it certainly is not pessimistic. The non-religious may draw conclusions from it which envenom life. Those, on the contrary, who naturally incline towards religion, will find in it fresh aliment for masculine contentment. They recognise themselves as factors of a life which is the world, to the effectuation of which they each in their degree contribute, the scope and scheme of which, though ill understood by them, requires and must obtain their co-operation. Law and God—the order of the whole regarded as a process of unerringly unfolding energy, and that same order contemplated by human thought as in its essence mind-determined—have become for them so all in all, that a wish for self, an egotistical aspiration, is quelled at once as infantile, undisciplined, irrelevant. Their chief dread is that dread expressed by Cleanthes, namely, that peradventure their good-will should fail, and they be dragged along their path by force, instead of following with genial submission.

IX.

With such views regarding man's relation to the universe it is not difficult to combine what

I have called "the noble humanities secured for us by Christianity." Nor is it necessary to abandon the sense of allegiance to and dependence on a Supreme Being, which hitherto has constituted the mainspring of religion. The idea of God, attenuated from its rudimentary gross forms through polytheism of many sorts and monotheism of several degrees of crudity, has recently become a highly rarefied metaphysical conception of divine personality. This process of gradual attenuation, which has reduced the Christian pantheon with startling rapidity to an almost diaphanous residuum of abstract theism, justifies to some extent the assumption that we have reached the vanishing-point of theology altogether. Certainly, theology, considered as a science, can never be so substantial, can never deal with notions and definitions so precise, as in the previous anthropomorphic stages. But a cautious speculator may well pause to consider whether the old impulse of mankind toward theolatriy or God-service be not entering upon a new, more spiritual, no less vital, phase of its activity; whether the idea of God, instead of vanishing or being dissipated, or yielding, as some surmise, to the paramount idea of Humanity, is not about to assume fresh actuality in correspondence with our scientific knowledge of the universe and with our enlarged notions regarding the wants and demands of man considered as a social being.

A retrospective glance over the development of Christianity may be useful here, since theism, in any coming stage of development, must resume what is residual and still living in the Christian faith.

Primitive Christianity fused the Jewish conception of God as Jehovah with the Greek philosophical conception of God as Law; these being the two grand monotheistic ideas then present to the world.* What was tribal in the Jewish conception vanished under Christ's preaching of the Fatherhood of God, and St. Paul's extension of this principle to the entire human race. In a short space of time, Christ, considered as being himself God, the divine ideal of suffering humanity, the infinite power of mercy and self-sacrifice, but also the inexorable power of justice destined to judge the world, thrust Jehovah into the background. Simultaneously, the Greek conception of God, as prime principle of law and order in the universe, disappeared beneath a multitude of metaphysical definitions, for the most part designed to establish the divinity of Christ, and to bring this dogma into accordance with previous stages of religious and speculative thought. Independent of the Trinity, as it were, there grew

* This point has been ably brought out by Mr. J. Cotter Morrison, in his "Service of Man," p. 182; a book which I had not read before I wrote this essay.

up a secondary series of conceptions, which centred in the man-God Christ: his mother, his *cortège* of saints, disciples, apostles, martyrs, shared the adoration which was paid to him. This highly anthropomorphic and almost polytheistic Christianity, devotionally more potent than the metaphysical fabric out of which it had emerged, controlled the imagination of the Middle Ages. But, at their close, a thorough-going mental revolution was effected. Through criticism, Science sprang into being; and Science, so far as it touches the idea of Deity, brought once more into overwhelming prominence the Greek conception of God as Law. On the other hand, the claims of humanity upon our duty and devotion grew in importance, so that the spirit and teaching of Christ, the suffering, the self-sacrificing, the merciful, and at the same time the just, survived the decay of his divinity. In other words, the two factors of primitive Christianity are again disengaged, and again demand incorporation in a religion which shall combine the conceptions of obedience to supreme Law and of devotion to Humanity, both of which have been spiritualised, sublimed, and rendered positive by the action of thought and experience. What religion has to do, if it remains theistic, is to create an enthusiasm in which the cosmic emotion shall coalesce with the sense of social duty, in which self-abnegating

submission to the natural order and self-abnegating service of man shall be regarded as the double function of all human beings in the evolution of the universe. Such an enthusiasm makes serious demands upon unselfishness; for God, revealed by Science as the Order of the Universe or Law, is divested of anthropomorphic personality, while the claims of humanity become daily more exacting. Yet Religion has always been able to draw largely upon the capital of unselfishness in men, and to find her drafts accepted. Meanwhile, such enthusiasm offers much to the individual; it frees him from those arbitrary notions—original sin, grace, salvation and damnation, election—which were the banes and bugbears of anthropomorphic theology. The fear of God, as of a severe parent or a hard taskmaster, disappears. The love of men our brethren succeeds to that very shadowy and subjective emotion which was called the love of God.

The Sermon on the Mount retains its value when we read it as the preacher of that sermon meant it to be read. The virtues of faith and hope and love do not fail for want of exercise. We still exclaim: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!" We still acknowledge our complete and absolute dependence on the power which brought us hither and will conduct us hence. Love, the greatest of these three, will always

form the binding element of human existence. Science institutes no monastery, no sacerdotal celibacy, no sacrifice of natural affection for the attainment of personal salvation. And what an extension of its province has the virtue of love received from Science! It is no longer confined to families and friends, and fellow-countrymen, and foreign people whom we wish to convert. It covers the whole creation and the world of man's inventions. It is co-extensive with discovery, commensurate with law and life; for curiosity is love. How far more lovingly we look on Nature now than when we regarded it as alien and cursed. It is certainly natural, when inspired by Science, to feel true sympathy with beasts and insects, birds of the air and fishes of the sea, trees and flowers, and everything that shares the life divine which throbs in us. Next to love comes humility; and I need hardly point out how Science edifies that virtue. It teaches us that lower forms of life, such, for instance, as parasites which prey upon our bodies in disease, have their place in the scheme, the same *raison d'être*, while still uncombated, as man.

We need not be afraid lest the religious spirit I have been attempting to describe, should induce a mere habit of indolent resignation to things as they at present are. On the contrary, the very essence of Science in general and of Evolution in

particular is to stimulate energy, combative, aggressive, struggling after higher stages. It knows nothing of the brutish crass indifference and ignorance of the monastic mind, awaiting beatification. It makes us certain that effort is the indispensable condition of advancement. If we recognise the divine life in parasites, we do not mean to acquiesce in their domination. They have ceased to be regarded as a divine scourge for our sins; they have become a divine means for urging us to efforts after their elimination. The soul possessed of Evolutionary religion, penetrated with the gospel of our century, runs no peril of lapsing into the hebetude of decadent Buddhism, or of exclaiming with folded hands, "Whatever is, is well." That formula will have to be exchanged for, "Whatever is, is well; but nothing really is which is not in progressive and militant movement."

This exposition might be carried further. It might be shown how all the elements of morality are not displaced, but remoulded by the scientific spirit; how the mysteries of sin, pain, disease, for instance, are quite as well accounted for by formulas of evolutionary strife and imperfect development as by the old hypothesis of a devil; how duty and volition can assume their places in a scheme of advance by selection and modification whereof the individual is conscious, quite as well as

in any orthodox system which steers between the Scylla of creative Deity and the Charybdis of man's liberty to act.

People are afraid lest a strictly scientific or deterministic view of human development should paralyse morality by encouraging the notion that we are only helpless cogwheels in a vast machine. Whatever may be the real explanation of man's liberty to choose and act, face to face with the inexorable sequence of the universe, it is certain that men live under the same law as that which governs all other organised beings upon this globe, the law of struggle for existence. A recognition of metaphysical fatalism does not destroy this law, or relieve us from the necessity of acting by strife and struggle in the effort to retain our hold on being and to advance toward higher stages. Determinism, as commonly now held, accepts the theory of man's control within certain limits over his own character. We have come to doubt the power of the will to effect a sudden change from vice to virtue or the contrary; we regard the doctrine of repentance and grace *in articulo mortis* as a hindrance rather than an incentive to right conduct; we hold that the individual can only direct, cultivate, and repress tendencies in himself and others. This, however, implies the power of resolution to form good habits and the determination to enforce them by a continued exercise of volition. A man wills to

minimise his tendencies toward vice by encouraging his opposite tendencies toward virtue, quite as much as the man wills who is supposed to change his vicious nature in one moment. The difference is that the process implied by self-culture and formation of habits is a lengthy one, and that the seductive prospect of living in sin with the hope of dying in grace is removed. Thus Science, far more stringently than Christianity, cries to the sinner, "Be not deceived: God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Nevertheless it is clear that determinism, unless it renounces ethics altogether, occupies an illogical position; for it has not overcome the old antinomy of free-will and necessity. It has not explained the possibility of willing to will, apart from the phenomenon of willing as a mode of consciousness. But acquiescence in the illogical forms part of the duty of rational beings, who have become conscious of their limitations, who understand the inevitable conditions of intellectual progress. We must not expect Science suddenly to explain the categorical imperative. Nor must we expect that it will make the existence of sin, pain, disease, want, the inequalities of life in all its phases, the waste that goes on everywhere in Nature, at once intelligible. Only I cannot see how the cosmic enthusiasm fails more conspicuously than Hebrew or than Christian theology face to face with these problems. I cannot

see how the conception of universal order, wherein human beings play their inevitable parts, is more destructive to volition than the conception of an all-creative, all-controlling, all-foreseeing deity. I cannot see that Science has rendered men indifferent to the sufferings of their fellows, or that it has enfeebled their courage, their sense of duty, and their energy in action. I cannot see that they are less sensitive to human hardship than the orthodox of Dante's stamp, who serenely acquiesced in the exclusion of unbaptized souls from happiness for ever. Meanwhile the soundness of the scientific method gives us some right to hope that illumination may eventually be thrown by it upon even the obscurest puzzles of experience. Through it, for the first time, we seem to have obtained some rational control over circumstance. Instead of excluding hope, this new gospel enables us to live daily and hourly in what Blake called "eternity's sunrise," the dawn of ever-broadening light and ever-soaring expectation.

Men are always in too great a hurry. More than eighteen centuries have elapsed since the apostles awaited the immediate coming of their Lord. He has not yet come in the way they hoped for; and those eighteen centuries now form by far the most important, the best-filled, period of history. During them we have learned gradually to disbelieve in a speedy dissolution of

the world ; and lately we have been brought to face the probability that men will last for many millions of years upon this planet. With that thought in our minds, let us look back upon man's past existence. How dim are human memory and records with respect to anything which happened four thousand years ago ! With what continually accelerated impetus has consciousness been growing and expanding in the race at large ! Then let us cast our eyes forward through the tens of hundreds of thousands of years to come. Surely we can afford to exercise a little patience, trusting that, if not for us or for our children, yet for men, our late posterity, more insight will be granted and their clarity of vision strengthened. This, then, is the promise of faith extended to religious souls by Science. "Ah ! but," it may be urged, "that is making too large a demand upon unselfishness ! Shall men seek nothing for themselves ?" I turn to Christians of the old school, and ask whether the renouncement of self, the will to live for others, the desire to glorify God, be not fundamental portions of their creed ? These have always been preached as virtues. Now is the time to apply them in pure earnest as principles of conduct. Should it be objected that the promises which made these virtues palatable are withdrawn, we must remember that we are no longer children

for whom the health-giving draught has to be sweetened with honey. Virtue has always been said to be its own reward, and to some extent this is true. At any rate, Science, with far more cogency than any theological system, proves that vice is its own punishment. There is, moreover, some satisfaction surely in contributing to the advance of humanity, from whom we derive everything, who expects from us so much. Without being Positivists, we may learn this lesson from the church of Auguste Comte.*

My argument has led me into a lay-sermon, more calculated to send people to sleep in some lecture-room than to arrest their busy eyes as they turn the pages of this book. It is time to quit the pulpit. But as I opened this part of my discourse with a Stoic's prayer, I will close it with a hymn by Goethe. The prayer sufficiently represents the submission and self-dedication demanded by the scientific spirit of religion; the hymn expresses its aspiration and enthusiasm. How far Goethe had studied the works of Giordano

* While preparing this essay for the press, I came for the first time (I am sorry to say) upon the admirable article of Professor Dowden on "The Scientific Movement in Literature." (*Studies in Literature*, 4th Edition, 1887.) Some of the conclusions to which he has been led, correspond to those I have been stating here, though he has not committed himself to any mystical and pantheistic speculation. It is an essay which ought to be read and studied attentively.

Bruno I know not, but in these stanzas he conveys, frigidly perhaps, yet faithfully, something of the burning faith which animated that extraordinary prophet of the scientific creed.*

To Him, who from eternity, self-stirred,
Himself hath made by His creative word !
To Him, Supreme, who causeth faith to be,
Trust, love, hope, power, and endless energy !
To Him, who, seek to name Him as we will,
Unknown, within Himself, abideth still !

Strain ear and eye, till sight and sense be dim ;
Thou'lt find but faint similitudes of Him :
Yea, and thy spirit, in her flight of flame,
Still strives to gauge the symbol and the name :
Charmed and compelled, thou climb'st from height to height,
And round thy path the world shines wondrous bright ;
Time, space, and size, and distance cease to be,
And every step is fresh infinity.

What were the God who sat outside to scan
The spheres that 'neath His fingers circling ran ?
God dwells within and moves the world and moulds,
Himself and Nature in one form enfolds ;
Thus all that lives in Him, and breathes, and is,
Shall ne'er His puissance, ne'er His spirit miss.

* The translation of Goethe's "Proemium to Gott und Welt," which follows above, was made by me many years ago, and was first printed in the *Spectator*. It gave me pleasure when Professor Tyndall quoted it in one of his volumes of essays, as expressing the religion to which Science can ally itself.

The soul of man, too, is an universe ;
Whence follows it that race with race concurs
In naming all it knows of good and true,
God—yea, its own God ; and, with homage due,
Surrenders to His sway both earth and heaven ;
Fears Him, and loves, where place for love is given.

ON THE APPLICATION OF EVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES TO ART AND LITERATURE.

I.

It is a common habit to speak of Darwinism and the Evolutionary philosophy as though they were identical. This is a mistake. Yet, when we consider the luminous results and decisive impact of Darwin's discoveries, the mistake is neither unnatural nor inexcusable. It has, however, the disadvantage of fastening our minds on biological problems, as though these alone were capable of an evolutionary solution. Other issues involved in the philosophy are thrust into the background.

Evolution implies belief in cosmic unity, in the development of the universe on one consistent plan. It implies the rejection of miraculous interferences, abrupt leaps and bounds in Nature. The Evolutionist feels sure that if he could trace the present back through all its stages to the period of origins, the process whereby that incalculably

distant past has advanced to this present would be found a gradual unbroken chain of sequences. For him, the genius of a Newton or a Shakespeare is the ultimate known product of elemental matter shaped by energies and forces.

Sir Charles Lyell established geology upon evolutionary principles. Charles Darwin proved that biology, the science of the origins and development of life upon our earth, can only be studied with sound results upon the same principles. Herbert Spencer has applied the evolutionary method to every branch of knowledge, including social institutions in his survey.

Professor Huxley, the most brilliant champion of Darwinism in the lists of polemical discussion, has recently stated his great master's relation to evolutionary science in clear and precise language.* While claiming venerable antiquity and a widespread *a priori* acceptance for this philosophical conception, he reserves for Darwin the merit of having demonstrated its efficiency *a posteriori* in one department of knowledge, and that the most immediately interesting to human beings.

Evolution, in its largest sense, may be defined as the passage of all things, inorganic and organic, by the action of inevitable law, from simplicity to complexity, from an undifferentiated to a differentiated condition of their common stock of primary

* Life of Charles Darwin, vol. ii. pp. 180, 186.

elements. We have accepted the evolutionary theory for geology, or the history of the earth's crust. We have accepted it for biology, or the history of life upon this planet. The next question is how we can apply it to the history of the human mind in social institutions, religions, morality, literature, art, language. To this question the first answer must be: certainly not in the same way as that in which we have applied it to the history of the earth's crust, and to the history of vegetable and animal life. The subject-matter is different. Nothing can be gained by transferring the language of biological science to the study of mental products. Nothing can be gained by attempting to treat successive stages of society and successive modes of thought as though they were geological strata. In like manner, nothing is gained by transferring the method of geology to biology, and *vice versa*. Inorganic and organic matter being still disconnected in our thought, each requires its own species of analysis, a different system of investigation, and a separate nomenclature. Yet biology and geology have this in common, that both are evolutionary sciences. The question now is whether mind, which is a function of the most highly organised animals, can be treated upon the principles which are recognised in those two sciences.

Biology, having entered upon the evolutionary stage, brings mankind with it. We are therefore justified in expecting that anthropology will tend more and more to become an evolutionary science, developing a method and a nomenclature of its own. But anthropology includes psychology, morality, history in all its branches—whatever constitutes mankind. These subordinate departments must therefore submit to treatment upon evolutionary principles, unless it should be proved that the old distinction between mind and matter has to be maintained, and that evolution is only useful in explaining the laws of material development. If such a conclusion be arrived at, it will involve the hypothesis that Nature, including living creatures, pursues a process from the simple to the complex, but that mind is acquired from without at a certain point of that process by some living things which are a product of the process. In other words, mind will have to be accepted as destroying the coherence of the universal order.

Our growing sense of cosmic unity renders such a dualistic hypothesis improbable. The comparative study of intelligence in animals and men does not tend to confirm it. Meanwhile, what is known about the advance of mankind from savagery to civilisation—recent investigation into the origins

of mythology, language, and religion, together with the remarkable additions made by Francis Galton to the science of heredity—encourage the expectation that mind in its historical development will eventually be treated upon evolutionary principles.

These observations are intended to introduce certain mental phenomena which invite an evolutionary explanation. The cases I mean to discuss have this point in common: A certain type of literature or art manifests itself, apparently by casual occurrence, in a nation at a given epoch. If favourable conditions for its development are granted, it runs a well-defined course, in which every stage is connected with preceding and succeeding stages by no merely accidental link; and when all the resources of the type have been exhausted, it comes to a natural end, and nothing but *débris* is left of it. Such types suggest the analogy of organic growth. If the analogy be not fancifully strained, it may be helpful in keeping our attention fixed upon the salient features of the phenomenon in question. This, to put the matter briefly, is the development of a complex artistic structure out of elements existing in national character, which structure is only completed by the action of successive generations and individual men of genius, all of whom in their turns are compelled to contribute either to the formation of the rudi-

mentary type, or to its perfection, or to its decline and final dissolution.*

II.

Criticism has hitherto neglected the real issues of what is meant by development in art and literature. We are indeed familiar with phrases like "rise and decline," "flourishing period," "infancy of art." But the inevitable progression from the embryo, through ascending stages of growth to maturity, and from maturity by declining stages to decrepitude and dissolution, has not been sufficiently insisted on. We are instinctively unwilling to undervalue individual effort. Our pride and sense of human independence rebel against the belief that men of genius obey a movement quite as much as they control it, and even more than they create it. Yet this is the conclusion to which facts, interpreted by historical and scientific methods, lead us; and the position we seem forced to assume, though it throws personal achievement somewhat into the shade, is concordant with the spirit of a

* The type so produced might have been compared to a nation's thought projected in art—to such a thought as becomes a poem in a single man's work—but which can find expression only through a hundred workers. It differs, however, from any particular work of art in this, that it does not manifest itself as a simple whole. It describes a curve of ascent and descent before it is accomplished.

scientific and a democratic epoch. At first sight, the individual lessens; but the race, the mass, from which the individual emerges, and of which he becomes the spokesman and interpreter, gains in dignity and greatness. After shifting the centre of gravity from men as personalities to men as exponents of their race and age, we gain a new interest in the history of art, a new sense of the vitality and spiritual solidarity of human thought in the most vigorous epochs. We learn to appreciate the labours of those who in obscurity laid the first foundations for some noble intellectual edifice. We deal more equitably and more sympathetically with those who were perforce obliged to carry art forward through its decadence to final diminution and extinction. Nor, though the individual seems to lessen, will this ultimately appear to be the case. Pheidias and Shakespeare are not less than they were because we know them as necessary to a series. Their eminence remains their own.

We have no means at present of stating precisely how or at what moment the germ of a specific type of art is generated in a nation. It often appears that the first impulse toward creativeness is some deep and serious emotion, some religious enthusiasm, or profound stirring of national consciousness. To transmute this impulse into the sphere of art taxes the energies of the first generation of artists, and the form appears to emerge

spontaneously from the spirit of the nation as a whole. Unless we knew that nothing is accidental we should be tempted to say that the form of the Attic drama in Greece, the form of the Shakespearian drama in England, was settled by chance. One thing, meanwhile, is certain. The germ, however generated, is bound to expand; the form, however determined, controls the genius which seeks expression through its medium. In the earliest stages of expansion the artist becomes half a prophet, and "sows with the whole sack," in the plenitude of superabundant inspiration. After the original passion for the ideas to be embodied in art has somewhat subsided, when the form is fixed, and its capacities can be serenely measured, but before the glow and fire of enthusiasm have faded out, there comes a second period. In this period art is studied more for art's sake, but the generative potency of the first founders is by no means exhausted. For a while, at this moment, the artist is priest, prophet, hierophant, and charmer all in one. More conscious of the laws of beauty, more anxious about the exponent form than his predecessors were, he makes some sacrifice of the idea in order to meet the requirements of style. But he does not forget that beauty by itself is insufficient to a great and perfect work, nor has he lost his interest in the cardinal conceptions which vitalise a nation's most

significant expression of its soul through art. During the first and second stages which I have indicated, the people turns out, through its interpreters, poets and artists, a number of masterpieces—the earlier of them rough-hewn, archaic, cyclopean, pregnant with symbolism, rich in anticipation—the later, exquisite in their combination of full thought and spiritual intensity with technical perfection, with grace, with the qualities of free and elevated beauty appropriate to the elaborated type. But now the initial impulse is declining; the cycle of animating ideas has been exhausted; the taste of the people has been educated, and its spirit has been manifested in definite forms, which serve as ideal mirrors to the race of its own qualities, and bring it to a knowledge of itself. Conceptions which had all the magic of novelty for the grandparents, become the intellectual patrimony of the grandchildren. It is impossible to return upon the past; the vigour of those former makers may survive in their successors, but their inspiration has taken shape for ever in their works. And that shape abides, fixed in the habits of the nation. The type cannot be changed, because the type grew itself out of the very nature of the people, who are still existent. What then remains for the third generation of artists? They have either to reproduce their models, and this is what true genius will not submit to, and what

the public refuses to accept from it; or else they have to extract new motives from the perfected type, at the risk of impairing its strength and beauty, with the certainty of disintegrating its spiritual unity. The latter course is always chosen, inevitably, as we now believe, and by no merely wilful whim of individual craftsmen. Nay, the very artists who begin to decompose the type and to degrade it, and the public who applaud their ingenuity, and dote with love upon their variations from the primal theme; are alike unconscious that the decadence has already arrived. This, too, is inevitable and natural, because life is by no means exhausted when maturity is past, and the type still contains a wealth of parts to be eliminated. Less deeply interested in the great ideas by which they have been educated, and of which they are in no sense the creators, incapable of competing on the same ground with their elders, the artists of this third period are forced to go afield for striking situations, to strain sentiment and pathos, to accentuate realism, to subordinate the harmony of the whole to the melody of details, to sink the prophet in the artist, the hierophant in the charmer. There yet remains another stage of decadence, when even these resources latent in the perfect type have been exhausted. Then formality and affectation succeed to spontaneous and genial handling; technical skill declines; the meaning

of the type, projected from the nation's heart and soul in its origin, comes to be forgotten. Art has fulfilled the round of its existence in that specific manifestation, and sinks into the dotage of decrepitude, the sleep of winter.

III.

A familiar example shall first be chosen from the history of English literature. It is what we know as the Elizabethan Drama, a type of art which completed its evolution in little more than half a century. When Miracle-plays, which England possessed in common with other European nations, though in a form specific to herself, had been developed to the utmost, certain episodes from the semi-epical dramatic cycle detached themselves from the unwieldy mass. Comedy found its germ in those lighter scenes which had always been conceded to the popular appetite for entertainment. Realistic drama emerged from the story of the woman taken in adultery, and from the biography of Magdalen. The History-play had its origin in subsidiary pieces adapted from the Apocrypha, of which the "Story of Godly Queen Esther" may serve as an example.

At this point the allegorical elements implicit in the Mediæval Miracle assumed a leading part in the disintegration of the ancient structure. Moralities paved the way for the dramatic analysis

of character, which took a more definite shape in Heywood's Interludes. Minor comic and realistic motives, already detached in the subordinate scenes which enlivened the Miracle, coalesced with this psychological form of the nascent drama. Independent plays, partly historical, partly tragic, on subjects connected with Biblical history, such as *King Darius* and *Cambyses*, were prepared for separate presentation. At the same time, two principal personages of the Miracle, Herod and the Devil, extended their influence throughout the transitional phase upon which the theatre then entered.

We are able by the help of documents, to set forth the opportunities for secular dramatic representation to which the custom of Miracle-playing led. Stages were erected in the yards of inns. The halls of abbeys and great houses welcomed companies of strolling actors. At last theatres for the public arose in the suburbs of London; they were simple wooden structures, partly open to the air. The small scale and the beggarly equipment of these theatres need to be insisted on, since the peculiar form of the English Drama depended in no small measure on these external circumstances.

Resuming the points already mentioned, we find that episodical farces, histories, and tragic pieces. together with the specialised allegories

called Moralities and Interludes, usurped upon the colossal stationary fabric of the Miracle. Miracle-plays continued to be represented at stated intervals. But a new dramatic type had come into existence. To this we give the name of the Romantic Drama. In its beginnings, as its origin appeared to be casual, this type was undecided and received but little attention from the cultivated classes. Yet it was destined to survive many perils, to realise itself, and to pass with astonishing speed to fixity in Marlowe, to perfection in Shakespeare, to over-ripeness in Beaumont and Fletcher, to decadence in Davenant.

Here we have to turn aside and notice the influences of the new learning and the Italian Renaissance, as these were felt in England. Cultivated scholars and the court, critics like Sidney, men of letters like the authors of "Gorboduc" and the "Misfortunes of Arthur" threw the weight of their precepts and their practice into the scale against the popular type of drama, which was as yet only in its stage of infancy. For a while it seemed as though the pseudo-classical principles of the Italian stage, derived mainly from Seneca and the Roman comic poets, might be imposed upon our theatre. But the shoot of the Romantic Drama, which had risen spontaneously from the crumbling masses of the Mediæval Miracle, possessed the vigour and assimilative faculty of ex-

pansive life. A group of lettered poets, including Greene, Peele, Nash, Lodge, and Kyd, took part precisely at this juncture with the vulgar. They lent their talents to the improvement of the type, which had already gained the affections of the English people. They systematised the amorphous matter of farce, history, and fable under the form of a regular play, with an action divided into five acts. They introduced classical learning and conceited diction. But they did not alter the radically Romantic character of the type. Some features, including the part of the Vice, which were otiose survivals from the Miracle and the Morality, dropped out at this stage of evolution.

Marlowe, joining this band of cultured playwrights, who had already turned the scale against the "courtly makers," next claims our whole attention. Marlowe ennobled the rough material of the Romantic Drama and made it fit to rank with the Classical Drama of Athens in her glory. This he achieved by raising dramatic blank verse to a higher power, and by his keen sense of what is serious and impassioned in art. Without altering the type, he adopted so much from humanism as it was capable of assimilating. In his hands the thing became an instrument of power and beauty.

Shakespeare was content to use the form refined and fixed by Marlowe. He developed it fully in

all its parts, according to its own capacities. There is no process but one of gradual progression discernible between the few examples of the earlier Romantic Drama we possess, and *Macbeth* or *Measure for Measure*. The germ has simply grown and effloresced.

At the side of Shakespeare stands Ben Jonson, in whom we observe an interesting example of the literary hybrid. Jonson did not succeed in freeing himself altogether from the influences of his race and age. His plays belong in large measure to the Romantic type. Yet his humanistic training warped him to such an extent that he stood outside the circle of his compeers, protesting in theory and in practice against the genius of Romantic Drama.

After this point, it remains to notice how the dramatic form, fixed by Marlowe and perfected by Shakespeare, begins to break up. It has realised itself and reached completion. What followed was a stage of gradual disintegration. Motives suggested by the supreme masters were elaborated in their details by men like Webster, Tourneur, Ford. We trace an effort to extract its last capabilities from the type. The complex is reduced to its constituents, and these are handled separately. Poetry runs over into eloquence and rhetoric in the work of Fletcher and his kind, who display a lack of artistic conscientiousness nowhere hitherto

observable. Plays are made by pattern, as in the case of Massinger and Shirley. A new generation, without creative force, continue the tradition of their predecessors by exaggeration of motives, isolation of elements, facile and conscious imitation.

Soon this stage of decadence leads to one of decrepitude. The incoherences of Davenant, Crowne, and Wilson, illuminated here and there by flashes of the old fire, prove that those elements of weakness which the Romantic Drama contained in its infancy, but which were controlled by strenuous force in the periods of adolescence and maturity, have reasserted themselves in its senility. To advance further, to save the type from ruin, was impossible. The Romantic Drama had been played out. All its changes had been rung; the last drop of its vital sap had been exhausted. Even if the Puritans had refrained from ostracising actors, the Elizabethan theatre could not have been continued.

Such, to indicate the outlines of this subject rapidly, is the history of the rise, progress, decline, and dissolution of what we call Elizabethan Drama. The Evolutionist differs from previous students mainly in this, that he regards the totality of the phenomena presented as something necessitated by conditions to which the prime agents in the

process, Marlowe and even Shakespeare, were subordinated. For him, this type of art exhibits qualities analogous to those of an organic complex undergoing successive phases of germination, expansion, efflorescence, and decay, which were independent of the volition of the men who effected them. To him the interest of Sackville and Norton, of Hughes and Sidney, of Jonson and his followers, consists in this: that they were unable, by thwarting or counteracting its development, to arrest its course, or to import nutriment from alien sources into the structure which it was bound to evolve from embryonic elements. When everything which the embryo contained had been used up in the formation of structure, it came to an end.

IV.

The law of sequence, which I am attempting to describe, admits of wide and manifold demonstration. Indeed, the more we study those types of art which are in a true sense national, which have occupied the serious attention of whole peoples for considerable periods, and which are not the sporadic products of culture or of personal capacity, the more shall we become convinced that its operation is universal. I have pictured those phases of incipient and embryonic energy, of maturely perfected type, of gradual disintegration,

and of pronounced decadence, under the metaphor of organic development and dissolution. But it must be remembered that this is, after all, a metaphor. It would, in many respects, have been quite as appropriate to choose a simile from the expansive force which carries projectiles for some space above the earth, and failing, leaves them to sink down again inert. That figure, allowing for its purely symbolic value, nicely expresses the curve described by art in one of the great movements under consideration—its vehement and fiery upward-rising, its proud sustention at a certain elevation, and its declension by almost imperceptible gradations into the quiescence of spent energy. We are, however, so far as yet from having penetrated the true essence of organic growth, or of expansive force applied to projectiles, or of human nature working for a common end in national art, that it is wiser not to dwell upon the metaphorical aspects and analogies of the topic under discussion. Metaphors, indeed, can hardly be avoided in this case. But we must strictly bear in mind that they are metaphors, imported from various sources to figure forth the phenomena of mental processes, which seem to possess an independence of their own, and a law of progression which admits of no alteration. Putting metaphors therefore in their proper place of subordination, our main object is to ascertain

whether the successive stages which I attempted to describe in the foregoing sections, can be traced in many of the larger manifestations of art, and whether we are justified in soberly maintaining that individual genius is incapable of abruptly altering their sequence.

The example I have already adduced from the English Drama in the reigns of Elizabeth and James corroborates the principle on which I am insisting. Owing to the abundance of materials at our disposal, and to the short period in which so important an evolution was performed, it is indeed very nicely adapted to my purpose. But enough has been already said upon this single instance; and all exact students of English literature are so well acquainted with the subject-matter, that each man can decide for himself whether the Shakespearian Drama fulfils the conditions I have indicated.

In the evolution of the Attic Drama, the same sequence is clearly marked. Behind the playwrights of Athens, for a background, looms the huge Homeric Epos, performing a part analogous to that of the cyclical Miracle-plays of Mediæval England. Just when the energy of the Rhapsodes had reached the point of exhaustion, lyrical dramatists began "to gather up the fragments from the rich Homeric table." This saying is attributed to Æschylus; and it accurately describes the relation of the earliest Greek playwrights to the epical

body of mythology and legend, which they handled by another method. The Drama had small beginnings, apparently in choral songs, to which the recitations of one or more persons setting forth an action came to be superadded. But occasional and arbitrary as this lyrical form may seem to have been, it determined the type of the accomplished drama; nor were material circumstances in the Greek theatres, as in those of London, wanting which confirmed the type, and helped to make it what we call Classical as distinguished from Romantic. Most important of these circumstances was the large size of the public buildings used for dramatic exhibitions, with their long shallow stage, and orchestra adapted to the celebration of Dionysiac rites. To these details were due the stationary sculpturesque character of Attic tragedy, the employment of masks and buskins, the prominent part assigned to the chorus, and the conduct of violent action off the stage. Classical drama, from the mere character of its environments, could not be so mobile, could not make such direct appeals to the senses and the fancy of the audience, as the drama which sprang up in booths and narrow wooden boxes. The former had affinities to bas-reliefs on temple fronts, the latter to a puppet-show. Once formed, the Greek type subsisted till its dissolution; even the mechanical attempt to revive it by a Roman

poet (Seneca perhaps) under very altered conditions, when the significance of the original form was lost, reproduced the lyrical element and the stationary sculpturesque mode of presentation which was proper to the Attic stage.

What we dimly know about Thespis and Phryni-
chus proves that the dramatic type initiated by the
earlier Bacchic poets underwent in their hands a
process of expansion similar to that which Greene
and his companions gave to the Romantic plays
of England. Æschylus, like Marlowe, but with a
tenfold weight of spiritual force, determined and
fixed the type unalterably. He exhibited the
mythus chosen for each special work in its
entirety, and allowed full prominence to the
religious idea which formed the kernel of the
elder drama of his predecessors. At the same
time he produced in the *Agamemnon* a master-
piece of supreme artistic power. The majesty
and glory of that unique play depend upon the
perfect interpenetration of a still vivid spiritual
faith with still ascendant poetry. The type
attained completion, but awaited an artist who
should round and temper it with more con-
summate grace and more of human charm.
Sophocles, less profoundly interested in the reli-
gious idea than Æschylus, manipulates his sub-
ject-matter more deliberately as an artist. He
stands aloof from the mythus without losing sight

of its vivifying inner significance. But he begins to decompose the colossal mass which *Æschylus*, deriving this from predecessors, had moulded into so ponderous a fabric of architectural magnificence. By breaking up the trilogy, and by moralising the conception of theological Nemesis, *Sophocles* made tragedy at once more manageable and more humanly interesting. The type, in his hands, undergoes an important transformation, which prepares us to expect the next stage. With *Euripides* the disintegration of the type begins. He neglects the mythus, or uses it only for the exhibition of human nature currently observed by him, modelling character as realistically as the conditions imposed upon all playwrights by the Attic stage allowed. The theosophy of *Æschylus*, always implicit in *Sophocles*, survives as a mere conventionality in *Euripides*. His work might, in truth, be compared to the rhetorical performances of Fletcher in the Romantic style. Again, he concentrates his powers on single characters, single episodes, single motives, often of great beauty, but disconnected from the harmony of parts which the type, as still existing, demanded. His poverty of design, his lack of spiritual enthusiasm, his sceptical and jaded mood of mind, were concealed beneath a mass of casuistical sophistries and stylistic elegances. These delighted the public

of his day, who hailed as progress what was really the sublime commencement of the decadence.

Unfortunately, we are unable to carry the exposition further on sure ground. Yet what we can collect about the plays of Agathon and Chærêmon justifies us in believing that a kind of flamboyant brilliance and beauty was all that now survived of the great impassioned tragedy of the Athenians. The type had worked itself out. It never afterwards revived again, for the simple reason that its forces were exhausted, that every vein of gold in the mine had been excavated, that the noble vintage had been drunk to the lees, that what the germ could yield of vital structure was exhibited. Those who quarrel with Euripides, and who deplore the extravagances of Agathon and Chærêmon (poets beloved by Aristotle), have to face the fact—for this is what I am insisting on—that Agathon could not have taken up tragedy exactly where Euripides left it, any more than Euripides could have stayed at the same point as Sophocles, or that Sophocles could have refrained from refining upon Æschylus, or than Æschylus could have kept his art within the archaic limits of Phrynichus, or than Phrynichus and Thespis could have avoided emphasizing the dramatic element with which the Dionysiac choruses were pregnant. Each play-

wright, the representative no doubt of many who have perished, was a necessary link in the production of that totality which we call the Attic Drama. It is as absurd to blame Thespis because he was uncouth, as to blame a stalk because it is stalky; as unscientific to condemn Chærêmon because he left nothing after him, as it is to condemn a husk because it is husky. Stalk and husk, leaf and flower and fruitage, are necessary to the plant in nature; and it is the business of criticism to recognise that an analogous necessity, rendering all parts significant, governs that more complex growth which the spirit of a nation evolves in art, and which, unlike the grass of the field, has no power of self-reproduction.

Greek sculpture furnishes another illustration of this sequence, although the variety of schools which arose in different provinces of Hellas, and by their reciprocal influence upon the art prolonged its flourishing period, renders it a less perfect example than the Attic Drama. Nevertheless, when we consider the successive stages through which sculpture passed, from the austere, through the sublimely beautiful, to the simply elegant and the realistically striking, we shall concede that the same law is operative. The grave manner of the archaic sculptors, earnestly intent upon the expression of the mythus, culminates (for us at least) in the heroes of the Æginetan

pediment. Pheidias represents the middle period of accomplished maturity. The subject selected for treatment by Pheidias is still penetrated with religious thought and feeling; but it is clear that the artist aims also at free æsthetical effect, exerting powers which have rarely been granted to any mortal, and expending unrivalled technical skill upon the revelation of elevated beauty. With Scopas and Praxiteles the type begins to soften. The former, if he be the author of the Niobids, displayed remarkable dramatic power, but a notable effeminacy of style; while the latter concentrated his attention mainly on the perfecting of single figures, exquisitely graceful—the Faun, the Erôs, the Hermes, the Aphrodite, the Apollo Sauroktonos, known to us partly in originals, but mostly through copies. In this third period a lack of true virility, a decay of serious intention, and a seeking after novel effects may be discerned; qualities which, in the succeeding age of the art, were replaced by realism, approximating to brutality in many instances. Powerful as were the sculptors of the school of Pergamus, we recognise that in them the representative Greek art had already abandoned the sphere of representative Greek virtues.

V.

From Rome we can expect no enforcement of the principle I am attempting to establish; for

Roman art, whether literary or otherwise, was essentially a hybrid; and, as I may attempt in another place to demonstrate, hybrids do not obey the same laws of evolutionary progress as the specific art-growths of a single race and a continuous era. Yet all products of the Græco-Roman period have their own particular interest. In Poetry, the indigenous genius of the Latin race, as might have been expected, asserted itself with most effect; for poetry is the direct expression of character. Satire and didactic verse obtained a new and separate value. But the conditions under which the epic, the drama, and the lyric were cultivated rendered these species (as is almost invariably the case with literary hybrids) stationary. They served to exhibit the culture of refined students, to embody personal emotions, to express the sentiment of patriotism, and to preserve some traits of manners, without having in them evolutionary energy. In Sculpture, the Greek strain almost entirely dominated, so that the best statues of the age of Hadrian may be regarded as a kind of after-blossom which reminds us of the age of Alexander. The most characteristic works of Roman statuary are those bas-reliefs on columns, monumental effigies, and sepulchral portraits, in which the archaic Etruscan style survives. Roman architecture, lastly, although it displays no specifically Latin qualities,

remains a genuine manifestation of the masterful imperial race. Roughly speaking, it consists of an amalgam of Etruscan and Greek elements; Etruria supplying the arch and the vault, which were unknown to Greece, Hellas yielding the superficial decoration of her orders, friezes, fluted columns, metopes, and other details of external structure. The Romans employed these twofold elements in a way peculiarly their own—with superb indifference to taste, but with the colossal strength and barbaric fancy of Titan builders. Consequently, this hybrid exactly expresses the genius of the nation, itself composite, which succeeded in subduing the world. Without having essential elements of originality, it is original in its ideal and actual correspondence to the Roman domination; and, in its later phase, in the age of Diocletian, it developed a new principle, which was destined to exercise wide influence over the future. This principle, to put it briefly, was the superposition of the arch to the column, a structural detail which determined Romanesque and Gothic architecture.

VI.

Roman art, for the reasons I have assigned, does not help us to establish the law of evolutionary progress. But it forms an important basis for the next instance, which furnishes, in my opinion, one of the most striking examples of

what I have described as the parabola of art. /
Wherever Romans established themselves during the period of the Empire, they introduced one style of architecture, so that France, Germany, England, Spain, and of course Italy, possessed a common Romanesque style of building. After the absorption of Christianity by the Occidental races and the decay of the old Western Empire, this style was handled by the Teutonic tribes, who succeeded to the Latin heritage, upon practically the same lines of treatment. Local and national differences are of course powerfully manifested; nor should these be neglected in the problem I am going to propound, for they render the phenomenon in question all the more remarkable. What I wish to insist upon is, that from this common material of Romanesque architecture there speedily emerged in all the sections of the subdivided Western Empire one manner of building, with novel and distinctive attributes. This we are accustomed to call Gothic; and the name, though derived from a false conception of ethnology, is useful in so far as it reminds us of the fact that the style was one which peoples of Teutonic origin developed from the monuments of their old masters. It fixes attention on the corresponding fact that, although the Romans carried their architecture to Greece and Turkey, to Asia Minor and Palestine, to the North of Africa and Persia, no such

novel growth as the Gothic type emerged from it there. This form, then, we have a right to regard as a product of the Teutonic mind, exhibited, with characteristic diversities, in all parts of Europe simultaneously. The distinctive features of the new style are the pointed arch and the adoption of piers instead of pillars. After the tentative beginnings of its earliest period, the finest examples of Gothic display a chaste and exquisitely graceful scheme of lancet windows, with restrained parsimony of ornamentation in the mouldings, bosses, pinnacles, crockets, and other subsidiary parts of architecture. This is what has sometimes been called the Early Pointed style. But it could not arrest itself at that pure and comparatively unambitious stage of development. It passed imperceptibly over into the Decorated style, where the windows were enlarged and filled with luxuriant tracery, and ornament was prodigally lavished upon every coign of vantage. From this stage it proceeded to what is known in England as the Perpendicular, and in France as the Flamboyant manner. Here the decadence was perceptible, for the manner of building began to contradict its own essential principles. The soaring arch flattened; the window usurped upon the wall; horizontal lines tended to dominate in the construction; structure, in many details, was sacrificed to effect; decoration, while it became more conventional, grew

more abundant. Yet it is clear to those who study the history of Gothic architecture that this Perpendicular or Flamboyant style was no less a distinct evolution from the Decorated, elucidating factors which were implicit in the purer manner, than was Euripides a development from Sophocles. Nevertheless, the type could hardly advance further without committing suicide; and consequently we find that Gothic dwindled into nothingness during those years which immediately preceded the Renaissance. It was not Palladio who dealt a death-blow to Gothic architecture. His pseudo-classical style, corresponding to the humanistic culture which overspread Europe from Italy in the sixteenth century, only served to fill a void already patent. The most remarkable point to notice about the progression of Gothic architecture is that it pursued the same course from inceptive energy to efflorescence and decay in all the countries of Europe simultaneously. We can trace similar and contemporaneously successive stages in France, England, Germany, Belgium, and Spain, underneath the local differences of each nation's monuments. And here it may be remarked, that the national characteristics of each district manifested themselves with greatest distinctness in the period which preceded the dissolution of the type. English Perpendicular, I mean, is more obviously separate from French Flamboyant than English

Decorated from French Decorated ; while the later town-halls of Belgium bring specific qualities to light, which are latent in Flemish buildings of an earlier stage. Italy alone, so far as Gothic is concerned, stands apart from the comity of European nations. The reason is obvious : Italy never submitted to Teutonic ascendancy ; and consequently, her Gothic monuments can hardly be regarded as more than exotic, albeit they present distinctive attributes.

VII.

I cannot forbear from adducing yet another instance, which seems to substantiate the position that a clearly marked type of national art, when left to pursue its course of development unchecked, passes through stages corresponding to the embryonic, the adolescent, the matured, the decadent, and the exhausted, in growths which we are accustomed to regard as physiological. This instance is that of Italian painting. It started from the ruins of Byzantine and Romanesque art, displaying a strongly marked religious bias at the outset, and at the same time deriving much from a nascent interest in classical antiquity. Giotto and his school, who represent the first stage, were earnestly intent upon depicting sacred history and legends of the saints in comprehensive works of fresco on the walls of churches. They also undertook to set forth the political and

philosophical ideas of their epoch ; a fine example of this industry being the paintings in the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena. After this double task had been accomplished, and an inexhaustible repertory of pictorial motives had been provided for treatment by successive generations of masters, it was felt that the art of painting required development upon the technical side. Accordingly, a new race, following close upon the heels of their predecessors, gave attention to anatomy and perspective, to the various methods of tempera and oil, and to every detail which might heighten the illusion wrought by painting. These efforts culminated in the works of Fra Lippo Lippi, Perugino, Mantegna, Fra Bartolommeo, Botticelli, Signorelli, and the Bellini, in whom many critics discern the finest flower of the Italian plastic genius. During this second stage, the enthusiasm for antiquity, which had formed a motive force second only to religion from the outset, continued to expand with ever-increasing impetus, so that the artistic type displayed itself more and more as a wonderful double rose of Christianity and Paganism, exhaling twofold perfumes, and expressing the two diverse factors of the modern spirit. A third generation of painters, Lionardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michel Angelo, Correggio, Giorgione, Andrea del Sarto, brought the type thus elaborated to its fullest completion ; and so rapid was the evolution of energy in Italian

painting, that during the very lifetime of these men, and even in the later works of some of them, the inevitable decadence became perceptible. The masterpieces of this third period derive their material indifferently from Christian and Pagan sources. In them both motive powers are utilised for a common artistic purpose; and a complete æsthetic harmony is effected for the apparently antagonistic elements which constituted the basis of modern European culture. Beyond that point it was hopeless to advance. The spheres of Christian belief and of Græco-Roman mythology, as these were then understood, had been ransacked; all salient subjects seized upon; all artistic problems within the limits of the type solved; every combination and permutation of the primitive series of numbers tried. Unless new ideas could be communicated to the nation in an instant (and this would have implied the genesis of a new type corresponding to them), Italian painting had nothing left but to pass away into hebetude. The passage to the fourth stage was wrought with singular celerity. Michel Angelo survived to see his country swarming with pretenders and mountebanks, who carried the specific qualities of himself and of his mighty compeers to absurdity, while they bedaubed palaces and churches with specious shapes which caught the eye, although they had no life-breath of the spirit in them. Yet the ma-

chines of the Mannerists and the Macchinisti, and the more strenuous labours of the Eclectics and the Naturalists, retain their value for students, since these demonstrate how impossible it is for industry and talent to revitalise a type of art which has fulfilled the curve of its existence. The curious point to notice about this decadence of Italian painting is that it imposed its own taste and fashion on Europe for well-nigh two centuries—until, indeed, fresh energies arose, which are conducting us, we hope, to some new avatar of art upon a different basis.

VIII.

It is hardly necessary to adduce further illustrations from the wide fields of ordinary culture. Every one can set to himself the problem of deciding how far Greek architecture, Italian Romantic poetry, Mediæval painted glass, Italian sculpture, the saga of the Niblungs, the chivalrous epic centring in Arthur, and many other distinct species which might be mentioned, do or do not corroborate the views I have maintained.

It might be objected that nothing is gained in clearness of insight and precision of method by thus treating criticism from an evolutionary point of view, while dangerous analogies are suggested when we fall into the habit of regarding products of the human mind as subordinate to the same laws of development as living organisms.

You prove nothing, it may be urged, by dwelling upon the stages in Greek sculpture, beyond the old familiar truth, that this art was closely connected with the religious and spiritual life of the Greek race. Its emasculation after the age of Pheidias was due to the relaxation of the national temper; its realistic leanings at a later period are explained by the fact that tyrants instead of free states then became the patrons of art. I answer, that no one is more convinced than I am of the intimate connection between all art and the spirit of the race which has produced it, but that this does not invalidate the conclusions at which I have arrived. A type of art, once started, must, according to my view, fulfil itself, and bring to light the structure which its germ contained potentially. As this structure is progressively evolved, it becomes impossible to return upon the past. No individual man of genius in the age of Scopas could produce work of Pheidian quality, albeit his brain throbbed with the pulse of Marathonian patriotism. Originality has to be displayed by eliciting what is still left latent in the partially exhausted type. To create a new type, while the old one is existent, baffles human ingenuity, because the type is an expression of the people's mind, and has its roots deep down in the stuff of national character. Men cannot escape the influences of their age; it is not

their fault if they belong to the obscure period of origins or to the sorry period of decadence. All have not the good fortune to be born in the prime and mature splendour of their nation's art. After meridian accomplishment, a progressive deterioration of the type becomes inevitable and cannot be arrested. Are we, for example, to suppose that in the age of Vasari and Bronzino at Florence there were not painters equal in artistic gifts to Ghirlandajo, Botticelli, Fra Bartolommeo? The supposition is absurd when we call to mind the profusion of such natures born in Florence during the fifteenth century. So far as capacity goes, there must have been abundance of good craftsmen. The reason why these did not manifest their genius on the same lines is that Painting had performed its curve, fulfilled its cycle, displayed its several aspects, effloresced, and been exhausted. In other words, there was no longer the old type to use. Is it credible that in England, after Davenant, there were not men of equal calibre with Webster and Beaumont? No; but such men could not produce Romantic dramas, because the Romantic Drama, as a type, had been accomplished. Their genius was compelled to seek other means of self-manifestation. Without the theory I am attempting to demonstrate, I do not see how we are to explain the fact that a nation like the

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English or the Greek at one very brief period of its existence, some fifty years perhaps, exhibits a marvellous fecundity of dramatic power, while before and afterwards, although the theatre continues, production of the same quality ceases. The reason why Italian Romantic poetry passed away in caricature and parody is, not that there was nobody in Italy capable of writing Romantic epics, and nobody who cared to read them, but that the thing itself, which had originated with the obscure street-singers of Roland, to which Boccaccio had contributed form, which Pulci and Boiardo had developed under two of its main aspects, which Ariosto had perfected, which Tasso had attempted to handle in a novel spirit, and from which Marino wrung the very last drops of life-sap, was now a thing of the irrecoverable past. *It* was no longer there, although its manifestations survived in printed books.

I shall be met with another and not less formidable objection. Your theory, it will be said, does not account for the obvious fact that there are always architects, always sculptors, always painters, always poets, who produce excellent work. In the present age, for example, Europe lacks none of these artists, although you are unable to point out any phenomenon corresponding to what you would call a clearly marked type. This objection has indeed to be carefully weighed, and

seems at first sight very difficult to answer. I must first be permitted to repeat words which I have already used while describing the sort of art-types to which I believe the laws of evolutionary development are applicable. I called them "in a true sense national, which have occupied the serious attention of whole peoples for considerable periods, and which are not the sporadic products of culture or of personal capacity." Now I would ask whether, at the present time, there is such a thing as national architecture in Europe? Have we anything corresponding to Greek or to Gothic building beyond more or less meritorious imitations? It is clear that such architecture as we have is a product of culture. I would ask the same questions with regard to sculpture and to painting, expecting the same answer. With regard to poetry and literature in general, excluding science from the latter species, I feel that the same questions could be asked and the same answer given. Therefore I reply that the arts in their present manifestation do not fulfil those conditions which I laid down as necessary to types obeying the laws of quasi-organic development. Music, it will be noticed, I have carefully refrained from mentioning at all.

In the next place, I submit that the arts of Europe, as they now exist, help to illustrate and confirm my theory. They are all of them hybrids, and what I pointed out with regard to Græco-

Roman art is true of them. Ever since the Renaissance there has been no pure and unmixed manifestation of national spirit in any art except Music. The problem for the Evolutionist increases continually in complexity by reason of crossings, blendings, and complicated heredity; by reason of our common European culture being adapted to divers national conditions; by reason of the rapid interchange of widely separated and specific products. I have, for instance, little doubt that the Novel could be analysed on evolutionary principles. But the Novel is one of the most "hybridisable genera" known to us in literature. When we reflect what Cervantes and Lesage taught English novelists, how much Fielding, Richardson, Sterne, Goldsmith, and Scott contributed to France, what influence Werther exerted for a time outside Germany, how the French producers of romances since the days of Balzac and George Sand have saturated the mind of Europe, what modifications we owe to the practice of American writers, and how the Slavonic peoples are now creating a new ideal for us of the realistic story, it will be admitted that I am justified in proclaiming the Novel to be no less certainly a "hybridisable genus" than the Orchis. It would take too much time to demonstrate, as I think it can be demonstrated, that when the arts have entered into conditions of existence which are favourable to

hybridity, as in ancient Rome and modern Europe, they do not exhibit that series of phenomena which I have above described at one time under the metaphor of organic evolution, and at another under that of a parabolic curve. Personal capacity, the liberty of individual genius, the caprice of coteries, assert themselves with more apparent freedom in these circumstances. The type does not expire, because the type has become capable of infinite modification. It is indeed no longer a type in the special sense I have put upon that word, but a mongrel of many types. What art loses in force and impressiveness, in monumental dignity and power to embody the strong spirit of creative nations, it now gains in elasticity and disengagement from the soil on which it springs.

IX.

We run a great risk when we attempt to break new ground in criticism : and I am conscious that the views I have expressed in this essay lie open to the charge of paradox. "With all your pains, you have only succeeded in discovering a mare's nest." "Instead of the pole-star you have been following some will-o'-the-wisp." Such are judgments which may be passed, and in the present state of knowledge may be fairly passed, upon the theory I have been expounding. And yet, when it comes to be investigated, I believe that any endeavour to bring

criticism into vital accord with the leading conceptions of our age will be found to rest on firm foundations. "Creatures of a day; what is a man, and what is not a man?" cried Pindar, long ago. We have not advanced far beyond this proposition and this question. But our views about the world and man's place in it have so materially changed, that it is no longer possible to approach the study of human energy in any one of its great manifestations—religion, the state, art, philosophy—without adjusting this to the main current and keynote of thought. If we believe, as we are now constrained to believe, that all things in nature, including the sidereal systems, the multitudinous species of animals and plants upon our planet, and man himself, are products of an evolutionary process, we must logically apply the rules of that process to things which humanity—not this person or that person, but the collective personality of races first, and afterwards the larger collective personality of races in conjunction—has brought forth. The conception is not new. It has long been latent in the higher thought of Europe. In Hegel's magnificent attempt to organise the world ideally by gazing on the mirror of our mind, it clothed itself with specious splendour. I have suggested that something fruitful for criticism as a branch of science may be adduced if we abandon the old

paths of caprice and predilection, abandon the ambitious flight of ideal construction, and confine ourselves for this while to the investigation of points in which the evolution of the spirit seems to resemble the evolution of nature.

ON SOME PRINCIPLES OF CRITICISM.

I.

WHILE tracing the decline of Italian art at the end of the Renaissance period, and its partial revival under the influences of the Catholic Reaction, I had occasion to write a chapter on the Bolognese school of painting. This brought before my mind the revolution to which taste is subject, and the apparent uncertainty of critical determinations. To what extent are there principles, I asked myself, by which men eager for the truth can arrive at a sound judgment in æsthetics, steering amid the shoals and billows of opinion? Or must we confess that literature and art are bound to remain the province of caprice and shifting fashion? With these doubts in my mind, I wrote the following paragraphs, which I will here resume, inasmuch as they may serve to introduce further discussion.

II.

In the history of criticism few things are more perplexing than the vicissitudes of taste, whereby

the idols of past generations crumble suddenly to dust, while the despised and rejected are lifted to pinnacles of glory. Successive waves of æsthetical preference, following one another with curious rapidity, sweep the established fortresses of fame from their venerable basements, and raise aloft neglected monuments of genius which lay erewhile embedded in the quick-sands of oblivion.

During the last half-century taste has appeared to be more capricious, revolutionary, and anarchical than at any previous epoch. The unity of orthodox opinion has broken up. Critics have sought to display originality by depreciating names famous in former ages, and by exalting minor stars to the rank of luminaries of the first magnitude. A man, yet in middle life, can remember with what reverence engravings after Raphael, the Caracci, and the Poussins were treated in his boyhood; how Fra Angelico and Perugino ruled at a somewhat later period; how one set of eloquent writers discovered Blake, another Botticelli, and a third Carpaccio; how Signorelli and Bellini and Mantegna and Luini received tardy recognition; and now, of late years, how Tiepolo has bidden fair to obtain the European *grido*.

He will also bear in mind that the conditions under which his own æsthetical development has taken place—studies in the Elgin marbles, the application of photography to works of art, the

publications of the Arundel Society in London, the encyclopædic and comparative collections of German archæologists—explain and to some extent justify what looks like caprice and chaos in æsthetic fashion. Our generation has been engaged in cataloguing, classifying, and rearranging the museums of the past. We need not be astonished then if the palace of art is in some confusion at the present moment. Despite such seeming confusion, a student who has been careful to addict himself to no one school and to no master, is aware that after thirty years of intelligent curiosity he stands on larger and surer ground than his predecessors.

Criticism and popular intelligence, meanwhile, are unanimous upon two points: first, in manifesting an earnest determination to distinguish what is essentially good and true in art from what is only specious, without attributing too much weight to established reputations or to the traditions of orthodox authority; secondly, in an enthusiastic effort to appreciate and exhibit what is sincere and beautiful in works to which our forefathers were obtuse and irresponsive. A wholesome reaction, in one word, has taken place against academical dogmatism; the study of art has been based upon sounder historical and comparative methods; taste has become appreciably more catholic, open-minded, and unprejudiced.

The seeming confusion of the last half-century

ought not, therefore, to shake our confidence in the possibility of arriving at stable laws of criticism. Radical revolutions, however salutary, cannot be effected without some injustice to the ideals of the past and without some ill-founded enthusiasm for ideals of the moment. Nor can so wide a region as that of European art be explored except by divers pioneers, each biassed by personal predilections and sensibilities, each liable to paradoxes of peculiar opinion under the excitement of discovery, each followed by a coterie of disciples sworn to support their master's utterances.

In order to profit by the vast extension of artistic knowledge in this generation, and to avoid the narrowness of sects and cliques, the main thing for us is to form a clear conception of the mental atmosphere in which sound criticism has to live and move and have its being. "The form of this world passes; and I would fain occupy myself with that only which constitutes abiding relations." So said Goethe; and these words have much the same effect as that admonition of his, "to live with steady purpose in the Whole, the Good, the Beautiful." The true critic must divest his mind from what is transient and ephemeral, must fasten upon abiding relations, *bleibende Verhältnisse*. He notes that one age is classical, another romantic; that this generation swears by the Caracci, that by Giotto. Meanwhile he resolves to maintain the

truth that classics and romantics, the Caracci and Giotto, are alike worthy of regard only in so far as they exemplify the qualities which bring art into the sphere of abiding relations. One eminent rhetorician is eloquent for Fra Angelico, another for Rubens; the former has personal sympathy for the Fiesolan monk, the latter for the Flemish courtier. Our true critic divests himself of idiosyncratic whims and partialities, striving to enter with firm purpose into the understanding of universal goodness and beauty. In so far as the works of Fra Angelico and Rubens are good and beautiful, he will be appreciative of them both, without feeling that the one excludes the other.

Aristotle laid it down as an axiom that the ultimate verdict in matters of taste is "what the wise man would decide." The critic may become a wise man, a man of enlightened intelligence, a *φρόνιμος*, by following the line of Goethe's precepts. The uncertainties of private judgment will never be wholly eliminated from criticism. But these will be diminished by the concentration of our minds upon the whole, upon abiding relations.

In working out self-culture and attaining to a feeling for the whole, the critic may derive assistance from the commanding philosophical conception of our century. All things with which we are acquainted are in evolutionary process. Everything belonging to human nature is in a state

of organic transition, passing through necessary stages of birth, growth, decline, and death. Art, in any one of its grand manifestations, avoids this law of organic evolution, arrests development at the fairest season of growth, arrests the decadence which ends in death, no more than does an oak. The oak, starting from an acorn, nourished by earth, air, light, and water, offers indeed a simpler problem than so complex an organism as, say Italian painting, developed under conditions of manifold social and psychological diversity. Yet the dominant law controls both equally.*

It is not, however, in evolution that we must look to find the abiding relations spoken of by Goethe. The evolutionary conception does not supply those to students of art, though it unfolds a law which is of permanent and universal application. It forces us to dwell on inevitable conditions of mutability and transformation. It leads the critic to comprehend what is meant by the whole. It encourages the habit of scientific toleration and submission. By it we are saved from uselessly fretting ourselves because of the unavoidable; from mourning over the decline of Pointed architecture into Perpendicular aridity and Flamboyant feebleness, over the passage of the sceptre from Sophocles

* This theory has been worked out most fully in the preceding essay.

to Euripides or from Tasso to Marino, over the chaos of mannerism and eclecticism into which Italian painting plunged from the height of its maturity. Our toleration and acceptance of inevitable change need not involve the loss of discriminative perception. We can apply the evolutionary canon in all strictness without ignoring that adult manhood is preferable to senile decrepitude, that Pheidias surpasses the sculptors of Pergamos, that one Madonna of Gian Bellini is more valuable than all the pictures of the younger Palma, and that Dosso Dossi's portrait of the Ferrarese jester is better worth having than the whole of Annibale Caracci's Galleria Farnesina. It will even lead us to select for models and for objects of special study those works which bear the mark of adolescence or of vigorous maturity, as being more perfectly characteristic of the type and more important for an understanding of its specific qualities.

Nevertheless, not in evolution, but in man's soul—his intellectual and moral nature—must be sought those abiding relations which constitute great art, and are the test of right æsthetic judgment. These are such as truth, simplicity, sobriety, love, grace, patience, modesty, repose, health, vigour, brain-stuff, dignity of thought, imagination, lucidity of vision, purity and depth of feeling. Wherever the critic finds these—

whether it be in Giotto at the dawn or in Guido at the nightfall of Italian painting, in Homer or Theocritus at the two extremes of Greek poetry—he will recognise the work as ranking with those things from which the soul draws nourishment.

The claims of craftsmanship on his attention are not so paramount. It is possible to do great work in art through many different styles, and with very various technical equipments. The critic, for example, must be able to see excellence both in the frigidly faultless draughtsmanship of Ingres and in the wayward anatomy of William Blake. At the same time, craftsmanship is not to be neglected. Each art has its own vehicle of expression, and exacts some innate or acquired capacity for the use of that vehicle from the artist. The critic must therefore be sufficiently versed in technicalities to give them their due value. It can, however, be laid down, as a general rule, that while immature or awkward workmanship is compatible with æsthetic achievement, technical dexterity, however skilfully applied, has never done anything for a soulless artist.

Criticism, in the last place, implies judgment; and that judgment must be adjusted to the special nature of the thing criticised. Art differs from ethics, from the material world, from sensuality however refined. It will not, therefore, in the long

run do for the critic of art to apply the same rules as the moralist, the naturalist, or the hedonist. It will not do for him to be contented with edification, or differentiation of species, or demonstrable delightfulness, as the scope and end of his analysis. All art is a presentation of the inner human being, his thought and feeling, through the medium of beautiful symbols in words, form, colour, and sound. Our verdict must consequently be determined by the amount of thought, the amount of feeling, proper to noble humanity, which we find adequately expressed in beautiful æsthetic symbols. And the man who shall pronounce this verdict is, now as in the days of Aristotle, the wise man, the man of enlightened intelligence, the judicious man, the man of just and liberal perceptions, sound in his own nature, and open to ideas. Even his verdict will not be final; for no one is wholly free from partialities, due to the age in which he lives and to the qualities of his specific temperament. Still, a consensus of such verdicts eventually forms that voice of the people which, according to an old proverb, is the voice of God. Slowly, and after many processes of sifting, the cumulative voice of the wise men, the *φρονίμοι*, decides. Insurgents against their judgment—in the case for example of acknowledged masters like Michel Angelo, Shakespeare, Mozart — are doomed to ultimate defeat, because this judgment is really based upon

abiding relations, upon truths for human nature which have been expressed in art.

Our hope for the future with regard to unity of taste is then : that, academical and sentimental seekings after a fixed ideal having been abandoned, and transient theories founded upon idiosyncratic or temporary partialities having been exploded, the scientific spirit shall make men more and more capable of living resolutely in the whole, more and more conscious of permanent relations. In proportion as we gain a truer conception of our own place in the world, in proportion as we refuse to accept anything which is not positive and solid, we shall come to comprehend with more instinctive certitude what is simple, natural, truthful, honest, and shall welcome all artistic products in so far as they exhibit these qualities. The perception of the enlightened man will then be the taste of a mentally healthy and impartial person, who has made himself acquainted with the laws of evolution in art and in society, and who is able to test the excellence of work in any stage from immaturity to decadence by discerning what there is of sincerity and natural vigour in it.

III.

Thus far I wrote three years ago upon this topic, seeking to define the critic's mental attitude toward his task.

Resuming the same subject from a somewhat different point of view, it will be well to inquire first what we mean by criticism.

The term critic (*ὁ κριτικός* and *criticus*) is classical both in Greek and Latin literature. According to its derivation, it means one who is competent to be a judge, the judges in poetic contests at Athens having been called *κριταί*. The notion of judgment lies therefore at the root of criticism; and the critic is a man who pronounces judgment upon the work of others.

This sense of the word was accepted without question until recently. The critic claimed to rank as umpire, trained by special studies for pronouncing on the merits of authors and of artists. He supported his decision by appeal to precedents, established canons, accepted definitions. Some difference of opinion existed as to the validity of certain rules; but no one doubted that the critic was a judge, or that it was his function to apply rules. As in jurisprudence law is made by the decision of judges, so in criticism the code of taste was formed by the dicta of eminent experts.

To this primary conception of criticism, a second has been recently opposed. It is contended that the critic should resign his pretensions to the judicial ermine. He must drop the ferule of the archididascalus, and assume the humbler pointing-

rod of the showman. It is not his function to pronounce from the bench on what is right or wrong, to acquit or to condemn, to apply canons and extend the province of orthodox taste by enforcing laws. On the contrary, he ought to be content with studying and displaying the qualities of things submitted to his intellect and senses. He must unfold the "virtues" of the works of art with which he has been occupied. He must classify and describe them, as a botanist the plants with which he has to do. In a certain sense, he may also take rank among creators by reproducing the masterpieces of poet or of painter with engaging rhetoric, or by eloquently exhibiting his own sensibilities in animated prose.

Thus we have already two distinct conceptions of the critic—as judge and as showman. These depend on radical and fundamental points of difference in our interpretation of the term. They are harmonised, to some extent, in a third and still more modern conception. According to this, the critic is neither a mere judge nor a mere showman. He must become the natural historian of art and literature, must study each object in relation to its antecedents and its consequents, must make himself acquainted with the conditions under which the artist grew, the habits of his race, the opinions of his age, his physical and psychological peculiarities. Only after having conscientiously pursued

this method, may he proceed to deliver judgments; and these will invariably be qualified by his sense of relativity in art and literature.

We have now three conceptions of the critic—as judge, as showman, and as scientific analyst. The first corresponds to what may be termed classical criticism. It prevailed in modern Europe till the close of the last century. The revolutionary spirit of that epoch called the magisterial authority of classical criticism in question, and introduced the second of the three conceptions, which corresponds to what may be termed romantic criticism. Meanwhile, the rapid advance of science led to the third conception, which takes for granted that the arts are capable of being historically studied in their evolution.

Classical criticism rested upon a logical basis. It assumed the existence of certain fixed principles, from which correct judgments might be deduced. Romantic criticism substituted sympathies and antipathies for rules, and exchanged authority for personal opinion. Scientific criticism proceeds by induction, historical investigation, morphological analysis, misdoubting the certainty of æsthetic principles, regarding the instincts and sensibilities of the individual with distrust, seeking materials for basing the canons of perfection upon some positive foundation.

According to etymology, the fundamental

function of criticism is judgment ; and during the classical period no doubt was cast upon the critic's right to judge. In the romantic period this function was disputed, and the rules by which a verdict could be pronounced were opened to discussion. In scientific criticism the idea returns to itself again, but on an altered basis. The critic arrives at conclusions after preparatory studies in history, psychology, scholarship, by means of which he hopes to ground his judgment on sufficient demonstration.

In each of the three stages which I have indicated, judgment is undoubtedly implied. The classical critic judged by principles, and by the decisions of his predecessors—by Aristotle, Longinus, Horace, Aristarchus, Boileau. The romantic critic judged by his own preferences and proclivities—like the Semiramis of Dante—

Che libito fe lecito in sua legge.

The scientific critic judges, but does not do so without understanding the natural and historical conditions of the product under examination, and without making the allowances demanded by his sense of relativity. For example, he will not, like the classical critic, pronounce the "Divine Comedy" to be "*une amplification stupidement barbare*," because he has no sympathy with the Middle Ages, and because this poem cannot be

made to square with the orthodox canon of the epic. He will not, like the romantic critic, exalt the "Song of Roland" while he decries the "Gerusalemme Liberata," because he is enthusiastic for semi-barbarous sublimity and feels a prejudice against the monuments of artificial art. In these three cases he applies himself to explaining why the "Divine Comedy," the "Song of Roland," and the "Gerusalemme Liberata" took certain and specific forms, and how each work of art in question was related to its age. Afterwards, he is at liberty to pronounce opinions as to the success with which the forms have been evolved, and to show reason why one or the other of them, according to his judgment, ought to be regarded as the nobler kind of art.

IV.

The three types of criticism which I have called classical, romantic, and scientific—the three sorts of critics, described by me as judges, showmen, natural historians—coexist, and have, to some extent, always coexisted, although it is correct to view them as representing successive stages in time. The true critic must combine all three types in himself, and hold the balance by his sense of their reciprocal relations. He cannot abnegate the right to judge; he cannot divest himself of subjective tastes which colour his judgment;

but it is his supreme duty to train his faculty of judgment and to temper his subjectivity by the study of things in their historical connections.

Heraclitus has a weighty saying, which those who aim at sound criticism should bear in mind.* "It behoves us," he remarks, "to follow the common reason of the world; yet, though there is a common reason in the world, the majority live as though they possessed a wisdom peculiar each unto himself alone."

The object of education is to provide us in youth with a sense of this common reason—a just if general view of what mankind as a whole is—a notion of what has been thought and wrought by our race in its totality, of what humanity at its best and strongest has achieved by interrupted yet continuous effort, of how we come to be what we are and to think and feel as we do. Humanism, the study of history and literature and art and law, suffices better than any other training for this needful propædæutic. It is superior to the study of mathematical and natural science, because its

* This fragment of Heraclitus is reported by Sextus Empiricus. The λόγος ξυνός of the original, which is opposed to ἰδία φρόνησις, must probably be taken in connection with the philosopher's theory of a pantheistic spirit, in which alone is truth, and in the participation with which alone is human wisdom. My application of the sentence is therefore to some extent derivative. See Bywater's "Heracliti Ephesii Reliquiæ," p. 38, for the Greek text.

matter is of greater moral and mental importance to humanity ; while, as a discipline, it is not inferior if rigorously conducted upon systematic method. Such education prepares the specialist to judge with width of sympathy and due regard for relations, to overcome personal caprice and predilection, and to survey the particular plot he selects for exploration as part of one great whole.

It may be added that liberal culture of the sort described goes far towards emancipating men from the vanity which aims at originality in and out of season. In their desire to be original, or to appear original, critics too often forget the paramount necessity of being true. It is better to repeat old things, if they are true, than to improvise new things, if they are not true. A man who thinks that he has caught some novel glimpse upon a well-worn subject, is tempted to distort the truth in his eagerness to do the discovery full justice. This leads to paradox ; and paradox, though bolstered up with epigram, has no prospect of survival except through the grain of truth which may be contained in it.

There is a difficulty here for the critic, who must always to some extent appear as the law-giver or law-expounder. From time to time he will find himself, through his own sincerity, in the position of an innovator, and may expect to be classified with the paradox-mongers. In these

circumstances, it must suffice for him to see whether he has sincerely tested his particular wisdom (*ἰδία φρόνησις*) by what he can perceive of universal wisdom (*κοινὴ φρόνησις*)—whether, in fact, the views he promulgates seem to him concordant with the tenor of the best thought of the age in which he lives, and with the lessons of the past which he has tried to appropriate. Then let him take courage and deliver his opinions to the world with such reserve and courtesy as he commands—with the expectation, too, of having them severely tried, and being sent himself to school again to study fresh conclusions, and to finger strenuously for the fiftieth time some Gordian knot.

Criticism, in brief, requires of a man the combined qualities of Conservatism and Radicalism, of patience and audacity, of humility and self-confidence, of severe respect for the past, and of an honest desire to forecast the future. In so far as he sincerely attempts to live in the whole, and to submit his personal perceptions to the test of what he can perceive of the world-current, the critic may fail through inadequacy of powers, but he shall not be liable to the reproach of vanity or the condemnation passed on wordy rhetoricians.

V.

Is there then a prospect, it may be asked, of criticism becoming a science? The answer to this

question depends on what we mean by science. It is clear that any branch of knowledge which has to do with creations of the human mind cannot be classed with the exact or mathematical sciences. It is also clear that criticism, implying as it does judgment, cannot be classed with such a science as geology, which does not pretend to judge, but catalogues, maps out, and attempts to trace the evolution of the material substances composing the earth's crust. Still it might, perhaps, be expected that criticism should become a science in the same sense as that in which we call Ethics and Political Economy sciences; that is to say, a department of systematised and co-ordinated knowledge. From this point of view one of its branches would be the classification and history of all mental products in the past; another, the determination of definitions and canons whereby such products should be estimated.

No sooner have we stated these conditions than it becomes apparent that too distinct a field is being claimed for criticism, and that we are wandering from the proper meaning of the word. Criticism is not of the same nature as science. It is not a department of systematised knowledge, but an instrument or organ ancillary to all sciences and to every branch of investigation which implies the exercise of judgment.

After admitting that criticism (as it is at

present understood) cannot enter the sphere of the sciences, we may still pause to consider how far it can be exercised in a scientific spirit, with a defined method, with principles established rationally and applied logically. In pursuing this inquiry, it will be convenient to limit attention to the criticism of art and literature, which is the main subject of the present essay; although, as I have said, the critical faculty finds exercise in every province of thought, and its operation in each is determined by the same conditions of psychology and logic.

VI.

Criticism, in order to be methodical, implies a previous metaphysic. The critic must possess views regarding art in general, and the functions of the several arts. He ought also to have formed conceptions of what is meant by the abstract terms he uses. For the most part, in this country, the practice of the critic is empirical, and notions common to the vulgar are accepted at their current value. In Germany, on the other hand, we have eminent examples, from Kant to Hegel, from Kuno Fischer and Schopenhauer to Lotze, of rigorous attempts to deduce the laws of criticism from abstract metaphysic. The two systems differ less than they appear to do; for whether general notions are empirically borrowed or logically demonstrated, notions of some sort underlie all.

judgments, and the real acumen of the critic is displayed in his application of them to particulars rather than in his philosophical ingenuity.

It furthermore implies a previous study of history. The critic should be familiar with the main literatures and art-epochs of the past. This, in fact, is more important than the metaphysical ground-work of criticism, and is consistent with the leading philosophical impulse of our age. For a time at least we have abandoned *à priori* and deductive methods for the study of natural development, and for the inductive accumulation of facts which shall enable us to understand phenomena.

It implies a certain amount of technical skill. In order to pronounce opinions upon music, the critic must possess some knowledge of harmony and some command of an instrument. The critic of poetry must understand the prosody of quantity and accent. The critic of sculpture and painting ought to be at least to some extent a draughtsman and a colourist. The critic of architecture should have studied the mathematics of proportion and the mechanical laws of structure.

Nevertheless, the critic need not be a professed metaphysician, a recognised historian, a practical artist, or an acknowledged poet. Poets, artists, historians, and metaphysicians may indeed be excellent critics, but not by reason of their special faculty in those departments. The critic is separate

from the specialist in any line of art or literature or philosophy ; and nothing is more false than the assumption that specialists should only be judged by specialists. The critic represents and instructs that vast majority of intelligent beings for whom the specialists produce their several works. He has to apply the faculty of sense and judgment which belongs to all liberal natures, but which he has trained beyond the ordinary degree of subtlety and precision by the exercise of sensibility and the acquisition of exact knowledge. It is the critic's function to act as interpreter and balance-holder, to lead and enlighten the common intelligence which forms the final court of appeal in matters of taste, to shape and express the judgments of the *φρονίμοι* or men of sober wisdom. How difficult his duty is, and how ill it is performed for the most part, none knows better than one who has attempted to discharge it in a sincere and modest spirit. Common sense, sagacity, justice of perception, openness to ideas, susceptibility to beauty, sufficient information, the power of weighing evidence and estimating the worth of testimony : these qualities constitute the critic, and whoever possesses and exercises them is a critic, whatever else he may be.

When judging or pronouncing an opinion, he has to consider both the matter and the form of that which is presented to his mind — what the

work of art contains, and how it is put forth. Since then all art expresses what the artist has perceived, thought, and felt concerning external nature, mankind, and himself—the world, human life, and his own being—the critic asks : How far in this case is perception just, accurate, penetrative, subtle ? How far is the representation of life and nature adequate to fact ? To what extent is the product in harmony with the best thought, the noblest emotions, the worthiest sentiments of our race ? What kind of individuality is indicated in the work ? Does the artist show himself to be a man of normal or abnormal temperament ? By right of what particular quality, moral, intellectual, and sensuous, does he claim attention ? In what relation does he stand to the permanent facts of human nature ? How is he related to the spirit of his age and nation ; and what has he contributed to the sum of culture ? The substance or content of a work of art being inseparable from its form, the critic connects these questions with a parallel series of interrogations regarding the artist's style, his command of the particular vehicle adopted for expression, his attitude toward the art of his own century, and the genius of the nation to which he belongs. When we speak of critical judgment, we assume that a double process of inquiry upon these lines has consciously or unconsciously been gone through by the critic. His final utterance or verdict is a summing up of the impressions

made upon him by the work subjected to his sensibility and analytic reason. His experience of life, his susceptibility to beauty, his knowledge of history, his insight into character, his powers of observation, his technical acquirements, are brought into play at every moment by the work of art before him, just as the same faculties were exercised by the artist while producing that work, which is the sign and symbol of the impressions made upon him by the aspects of nature, the tragedy or comedy of human life, and the drama of his own inner experience. The artist presents a view of the world and man gained at first hand from the object. The critic repeats a view of the world and man at second hand with the work of art as object. The artist does not reason or explain. The critic states or implies reasons for his opinion; and it is this difference between the creative and the critical act which imports into the latter an obvious exercise of the judicial faculty. Art itself implies judgment. By his selection of subjects and manner of treatment, the artist betrays a voluntary or involuntary preference, which constitutes his judgment on the things he represents. But the critic, having not merely to clothe impressions in form, but to give an account of them, and if possible to explain his opinion persuasively to the intelligence of the world, brings the act of judgment, which is logically involved in every mental operation, more prominently and deliberately forward.

VII.

In criticism there is an unavoidable subjective element, which will always prevent it from being in the exact sense scientific. Products of the human mind are not to be classified in the same way as products of nature. It is doubtful whether the history of arts and literatures will ever be placed upon the same footing as geology and botany. Far less have we the right to expect that the criticism (as distinguished from the history) of literary and artistic work will be governed by a method independent of the critic's personality.

In criticism the mind of one individual, qualified by certain idiosyncratic properties, and further qualified by the conditions of his race and age, is brought to bear upon the product of another human mind, itself qualified by certain idiosyncratic properties and further qualified by the conditions of a certain race and century. In this way a quadruple element of subjectivity enters into the final estimate, as will appear from the following diagram :



Here *A* stands for the artist, *b* for his temperament, *c* for what we will call his milieu. *D* stands

for the critic, *e* for his temperament, *f* for his milieu. Thus the relation between *A* and *D*, the artist and the critic, involves a blending of *b*, *c*, *e*, *f*, so uncertain in its combinations as to preclude scientific exactitude in the estimate formed by the latter. Moral, political, religious, æsthetic, sensuous sympathies and antipathies play their inevitable part, preventing the intellect of the critic from fully attaining to that quality of dry light which should be the object of his earnest effort. For like reasons, no two critics will ever be able to take precisely the same view of any one object of art.

Owing to this intrusion of subjectivity, one of the prime difficulties of criticism is correct interpretation. How well-nigh impossible it is to be quite sure that we have caught the meaning, felt the tone of an ancient author! The criticism of the Bible, the criticism of Aristotle, and Plato, and Homer, have suffered and are suffering from defective interpretation to an extent of which the world is only tardily becoming conscious. If we consider Calvin's interpretation of S. Paul and Gladstone's views on Homer, what I mean by the blending of quadruple subjectivity will be glaringly apparent.

Criticism, in the modern sense of the word, began with the humanistic movement of the early Renaissance. Those first Italian scholars who

collected Greek and Latin MSS. approached the literature of antiquity with insufficient feeling for its historical development. They regarded that vast mass of documents, extending over about one thousand years, as a totality, without perspective and without a just discrimination of successive periods. They assumed, for instance, that the poem of Hero and Leander, because it bore the name of Musæus, was the very earliest instead of being, as it is, one of the very latest products of Hellenic genius. They interpreted the genuine dialogues of Plato by the light of Proclus and Plotinus. They confounded the writings of Aristotle with the traditions of his school and with the glosses of Arabian commentators. In that first period of scholarship there was little or no sense for the relative value of evidence, no inquiry into the authority of witnesses. Latin and Græco-Roman writers, Cicero and Plutarch, were accepted as conclusive with regard to well-nigh prehistoric stages in the political history of Sparta. The verses of an Alexandrian poet were studied side by side with genuine fragments of Anacreon, as though both formed the relics of one author. The epitomes of Diogenes Laertius, the biographies published by Neoplatonic mystics, were regarded as authoritative on the opinions of Pythagoras and Plato, Democritus and Heraclitus. In the field of plastic art a similar want of discrimination prevailed.

Every statue of antiquity, whether proceeding from the authentic chisel of Pheidias or from the workshop of a craftsman in the age of Hadrian, appeared to have an equal value. Originals and copies were alike the objects of unquestioning veneration.

Thanks to the profound enthusiasm awakened by the revival of learning in the fifteenth century, thanks also to the fact that humanism now began to form the staple of European culture, this stage of omnivorous acceptance and encyclopædic absorption merged into one of patient and minute investigation. The microscope was applied to classical literature; its fragmentary state became apparent; the many centuries from Homer to Ausonius were reckoned; close study of style revealed much that was spurious, counterfeit, of base alloy and of trifling evidential value in hitherto revered authorities. The detailed examination of MSS. required by editors of Greek and Latin authors proved an excellent school in criticism. So did the controversies which raged around the rival merits of Homer and Virgil as epic poets, of Plato and Aristotle as philosophers. Penetrating further into the spirit of the past, students began to perceive in what respects the thinkers of the classic age differed from themselves, and in what points humanity remained unaltered. This comparison of a recovered civilisation with the civilisation of the sixteenth century, this shock of the Christian with

the Pagan mind, stimulated curiosity and encouraged a keenly sceptical habit of investigation. Valla's exposure of the false Decretals and the Donation of Constantine, and his demonstration that the epistle of Abgarus was palpably spurious, marked an epoch in the annals of destructive criticism. Then came the movement of the Reformation in Germany, and the movement of the New Philosophy in Southern Italy, breaking down at one and the same time the authority of ecclesiastical and of Aristotelian tradition, and forcing men to regard documents, superstitiously accounted sacred, in the light of common sense.

Thus criticism, as we understand it, emerged; and one of the main benefits derived from the Revival of Learning is the excitation of a sound instinct regarding its method. If we owed nothing else to humanism, this alone should reconcile us with the Renaissance; for science itself may be said to have sprung into existence from habits of exact research aroused by the scrupulous examination and comparison of antique records.

The chief danger of criticism in its present stage is not that patient and exhaustive investigation should be spared, but that the critic should be insufficiently upon his guard against subjective fancies, paradoxes of opinion, and super-subtleties of ingenuity. Science suffers less from this peril, though, even in science, the plausible hypotheses

of brilliant thinkers may be mistaken for demonstrations. The history of Darwinism after the publication of the "Origin of Species," in 1859, furnishes a very interesting example of criticism applied for a series of years to a theory which startled the world, and won its way by slow degrees under the test of strict and hostile examination. Literature and art are peculiarly liable, owing to their subject-matter, to distortion and misrepresentation at the hands of historians and critics. It behoves us, therefore, to be specially upon our guard against the importation of our own thoughts and feelings into the works we have to deal with, and to be mindful that our subjectivity is a perpetual source of danger.

It is something to have gained a clear conception of the critical method. It is even more to have become aware of its limitations. To this extent, then, through the perception of what criticism ought to be, through the definition of its province, and through the recognition of what is inevitably imperfect in its instrument, the method tends to being in its own way scientific. Each year adds to our systematic knowledge of arts and literatures; and with each extension of that knowledge the body of undisputed facts, the sum of accepted opinions, are enlarged. It might almost be maintained that we are slowly advancing towards a period at which criticism will become

deductive through the accumulation of principles and their verification by the comparative method of study applied to arts and letters.

VIII.

At this point it is not unnatural to ask what are the relations between criticism and erudition. What is the real value of laborious learning—bibliographical, historical, philological, etc.—for the higher culture?

The critic, if he has a right conception of his task, will regard no knowledge, however formal, no information, however slight and seemingly irrelevant, as unimportant for his purpose.

It was from technical inquiries into the redaction of the Gospels, the composition of the Pentateuch, the authorship of the Psalms, the probable antiquity of the Book of Job, the dramatic character of the Song of Solomon, the integrant parts of Isaiah, the canon of S. Paul's epistles, the political allusions in the Apocalypse, that sound views on the subject of inspiration and the character in general of our sacred writings gradually filtered into Biblical criticism.

We had not learned to know Shakespeare before we attempted to disentangle his part in *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*; before we tried to eliminate what does not belong to him from *Henry VIII.*; before we entertained the

question of touchings and rehandlings necessitated by his double craft of theatre-proprietor and playwright. Not an atom of dry-as-dust learning, derived from the microscopical collation of texts, from anxious scrutiny of deeds and records, from tedious bibliographical and chronological researches, goes for naught in our intelligence of Shakespeare.

Each rill of minute investigation swells the main current of criticism. Each limitation of the subject under consideration acts like a useful dam against the irruption of conceit and fancy in the critic. The more he knows of fact, the less can he expatiate in regions of conjecture.

Take a minor instance. Suppose we are about to deal with Sidney's "*Astrophel and Stella*." Have we here a key to unlock Sidney's heart? Are those enigmatical poems, the first love-poems composed in England on a complicated autobiographical theme, to be accepted (as they seem to be intended) for the diary of Sidney's feelings? Can they be explained by what is known of the chronology of his brief manhood? What light is thrown upon them from the threnodies with which his death was greeted, and the numerous allusions to his name dispersed through all the writings of that period? To what extent must allowance be made for the Italian influences under which the courtier-poet, the travelled scholar, the morning star of the renascence in our island, penned them?

Are they in fact the serious record of real life-experience, or the sport of Platonising fancy in a studied form of art, or something intermediate, to which both man of heart and man of letters gave their quota?

The answers to these questions, if any satisfactory answers can be given, are only to be arrived at after a comparison of dates, a study of collateral documentary evidence, a careful examination of the allusions to facts and incidents embedded in the poems, and a detailed analysis of the earliest printed editions of the book with special reference to the order of the several pieces. It is only by following such a method that the critic will venture to decide how the sonnets and songs which constitute the body of the work should be arranged, and whether Stella (the Lady Penelope Devereux) was a married woman when Sidney wrote them. A special familiarity with the Italian models then in vogue may help him to form an opinion as to the imaginative nature of these lyrics. With this end in view, he studies the types under which that conventional style of utterance presented itself to Elizabethan Englishmen, and carefully notes the differences of tone and accent between Tasso and Bembo on the one hand, and Sidney and Shakespeare on the other.

After such preliminary labours, true critics will often best display their quality of wisdom by

abandoning the problem as insoluble. They will be content to state its conditions as fairly and as comprehensively as possible, leaving their readers to draw conclusions, and modestly suggesting the path on which they have themselves been led. Indeed, it is just here that the critic has to protect himself most warily against his own subjective ingenuity. To construct a plausible scheme of explanation, to fence it round with psychological hypotheses, to emphasize the points of evidence which give colour to the view adopted, to attenuate conflicting testimony, is cheap and easy enough. This is what minds of the second order in criticism, with whom erudition and the theory weigh more than an imperious anxiety to prove the truth, delight in doing. But the test of a good critic is suspension of judgment in cases which are not convincingly proven.

Take the more important instance of Shakespeare's sonnets. We have all tried to wring the heart out of that mystery. We have all felt the accent of acute passion alternating with the accent of what looks like artificial compliment—the inequality of style, the inequality of emotion, the inequality of artistic handling—in those unparalleled outpourings of a mighty poet's soul. We do not doubt their genuineness. We trace the outlines of a story in them, which it is not difficult to decipher, although the import may be painful.

So far we are agreed. But when it comes to deciding whether Shakespeare intended a merely dramatic series of psychological lyrics, or whether he committed his own experience from day to day to paper in the sonnets, or whether he wrote them for a friend—who Mr. W. H. was, and who the dark lady was—then at once we differ. As it seems to me, this is the point at which sound criticism diverges from criticism over-weighted with erudition or with subjective prepossession. Queen Elizabeth, Lord Southampton, Lord Pembroke, William Hughes,* William Himself, have successively posed, in the schemes of constructive critics, for Mr. W. H. I need not enlarge upon this topic, because the case of Shakespeare's sonnets is only too familiar to every student of English literature. I have adduced the instance simply because it is a crucial one—one in which the competent critic should hail every contribution made by research or formulated by a scheming brain for the solution of a sphinx-like problem, but should avoid like a hidden rock—*tanquam scopulum*—any temptation to construct a biographical romance out of elements so slender, until irrefutable facts have been presented. In a word, criticism welcomes research, welcomes discovery, welcomes constructive

* William Hughes had been in literary existence a century before Mr. Oscar Wilde resuscitated this hypothetical youth in a magazine of 1889.

ingenuity. But she does not recognise these things as criticism, and holds a dubious balance until the case seems proved. The same may be said about the less enigmatical problem of Tasso's relation to Leonora d'Este. Let the critic state the problem as he finds it, but not engage (unless he be convinced) in any of its plausible solutions. Enough is left for the exercise of his æsthetic judgment in the poetry of Shakespeare's and of Tasso's sonnets.

These remarks bring to light two relations in which the spirit of research and erudition is dangerous to criticism.

In the first place it inclines people to make too much of mere externals—as though one should persuade himself that a knowledge of the bibliography of the “Paradise Lost” is essential to the comprehension of that poem, or that the “Faery Queen” demands a preparatory training in Anglo-Saxon. You may know everything about the editions of Milton's poems, and have their misprints at your fingers' end, and yet remain incapable of feeling what is sublime in Milton's conception and artistic in his execution. You may be acquainted with the history of our language in all its stages, and may be able to point out Spenser's archæologisms, without touching the points which make his epic valuable for culture. You may discourse with the tongue of an angel upon the dates of Shakespeare's plays, and at the

same time show a stolid incapacity for apprehending their true drift and nervous grip on human life. In short, bibliography, linguistic studies, questions of dates and sources, are only important as ancillary to the real work of criticism, which is to interpret the workings of the human spirit by its monuments in art and letters.

In the second place, erudition, when not controlled by vigorous sense, encourages what may be described as the nidification of mares' nests—a malady most incident to ingenious but flighty theorists, who nourish the grotesque fictions of their ignorance upon the milk of their ill-assimilated learning. The misuse of erudition leads to such fundamental misconceptions as that which vitiates Dr. Guest's great work on English Rhythms. It renders the hypothesis of Bacon's authorship of Shakespeare's plays attractive in the eyes of incompetent students. It inflates blathery compilations on esoteric Buddhism, Spiritualism, the history of Secret Societies, the migrations of the ten Lost Tribes, Phallic Worship, Apocalyptic Prophecy. For years it has infected speculative writing on the evolution of religions, the interpretation of mythology, the origin of language, ethnology, phrenology, chiromancy, and all the bastard brood descended from mediæval astrology and magic. It taints the otherwise sound work of many scholars of the German type, who have

not common sense or knowledge of life enough to save them from fabricating preposterous solutions of perplexing problems, and applying the resources of their knowledge to supporting major premisses which are palpably absurd.

Learning cannot come amiss to those who understand its use. He who has most of it is best equipped for criticism. But learning does not supply the critical faculty. To criticism it is the necessary foundation and a serviceable handmaid. Rightly employed, learning checks caprice, sustains our feet on solid ground, and leads to hidden paths whereby we may approach the truth. Misused, it smothers intuition in a jungle of cumbrous and unimportant details, diverts attention from the proper end of culture, or bases the vagaries of the fancy upon sand-banks and rubble.

It seems trite to say so—yet common sense, implying knowledge of human nature, prudence, shrewdness, the power of weighing evidence, is the main quality for the critic. Learning gives weight and force; it is indispensable. But learning is as nothing, or as worse than nothing, unless sound judgment stand above it. Sense, like charity in S. Paul's exposition of the virtues, is the one and saving faculty—"though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, though my memory is stored with the *omne scibile*, and I have not common sense,

I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." Without this, erudition obscures the main points at issue, and transforms the mirage of illusion into momentary domes and towers. A sensible, unlettered girl is a better critic than the learned simpleton who uses the stores of a vast library to bolster up some baseless paradox. Sense, in the region of criticism, is equivalent to imagination. It enables its possessor to distinguish what is or may be from what cannot be.

IX.

The critical faculty may be described then as trained perception in a man endowed with common sense and sound imagination. This faculty may be exercised in every branch of knowledge; but for its particular display in any single province we have to presuppose special qualifications (natural and acquired, physical and mental), which enable the skilled interpreter and judge to pronounce opinions with more authority than the rest of mankind. A critic of music need not be a critic of poetry; nor do we seek enlightenment on the art of painting from a judge of horseflesh.

Finally, the critic must beware of his subjective bias, and keep himself resolutely in accord with the common wisdom of humanity. No single wise man decides any question. A consensus of wise men is needed to establish taste. He must not suffer

himself to be diverted by partialities and predilections into side-currents. His duty it is to abide by commanding principles, and, living in the whole, to appreciate the correlation of the subject he has chosen with the complex of man's intellectual and moral nature.

THE PROVINCES OF THE SEVERAL ARTS.

I.

“ART,” said Goethe, “is but form-giving.” We might vary this definition, and say, “Art is a method of expression or presentation.” Then comes the question: If art gives form, if it is a method of expression or presentation, to what does it give form, what does it express or present? The answer certainly must be: Art gives form to human consciousness; expresses or presents the feeling or the thought of man. Whatever else art may do by the way, in the communication of innocent pleasures, in the adornment of life and the softening of manners, in the creation of beautiful shapes and sounds, this, at all events, is its prime function.

While investing thought and sentiment, the spiritual subject-matter of all art, with form, or finding for it proper modes of presentation, each of the arts employs a special medium, obeying the laws of beauty proper to that medium. The vehicles of the arts, roughly speaking, are solid substances (like ivory, stone, wood, metal), pigments,

sounds, and words. The masterly handling of these vehicles and the realisation of their characteristic types of beauty have come to be regarded as the craftsman's paramount concern. And in a certain sense this is a right conclusion ; for dexterity in the manipulation of the chosen vehicle, and power to create a beautiful object, distinguish the successful artist from the man who may have had like thoughts and feelings. This dexterity, this power, are the properties of the artist *quod* artist. Yet we must not forget that the form created by the artist for the expression of a thought or feeling is not the final end of art itself. That form, after all, is but the mode of presentation through which the spiritual content manifests itself. Beauty, in like manner, is not the final end of art, but is the indispensable condition under which the artistic manifestation of the spiritual content must be made. It is the business of art to create an ideal world, in which perception, emotion, understanding, action, all elements of human life sublimed by thought, shall reappear in concrete forms as beauty. This being so, the logical criticism of art demands that we should not only estimate the technical skill of an artist and his faculty for presenting beauty to the æsthetic sense, but that we should also ask ourselves what portion of the human spirit he has chosen to invest with form, and how he has conceived his subject. It is not

necessary that the ideas embodied in a work of art should be the artist's own. They may be common to the race and age: as, for instance, the conception of sovereign deity expressed in the Olympian Zeus of Pheidias, or the conception of divine maternity expressed in Raphael's Madonna di San Sisto. Still the personality of the artist, his own intellectual and moral nature, his peculiar way of thinking and feeling, his individual attitude toward the material given to him in ideas of human consciousness, will modify his choice of subject and of form, and will determine his specific type of beauty. To take an example: supposing that an idea, common to his race and age, is given to the artist for treatment; this will be the final end of the work of art which he produces. But his personal qualities and technical performance determine the degree of success or failure to which he attains in seizing that idea and in presenting it with beauty. Signorelli fails where Perugino excels, in giving adequate and lovely form to the religious sentiment. Michel Angelo is sure of the sublime, and Raphael of the beautiful.

Art is thus the expression of the human spirit by the artist to his fellow-men. The subject-matter of the arts is commensurate with what man thinks and feels and does. It is as deep as religion, as wide as life. But what distinguishes art from religion or from life is, that this subject-

matter must assume beautiful form, and must be presented directly or indirectly to the senses. Art is not the school or the cathedral, but the playground, the paradise of humanity. It does not teach, it does not preach. Nothing abstract enters into art's domain. Truth and goodness are transmuted into beauty there, just as in science beauty and goodness assume the shape of truth, and in religion truth and beauty become goodness. The rigid definitions, the unmistakable laws of science, are not to be found in art. Whatever art has touched acquires a concrete sensuous embodiment, and thus ideas presented to the mind in art have lost a portion of their pure thought-essence. It is on this account that the religious conceptions of the Greeks were so admirably fitted for the art of sculpture, and certain portions of the mediæval Christian mythology lent themselves so well to painting. For the same reason the metaphysics of ecclesiastical dogma defy the artist's plastic faculty. Art, in a word, is a middle term between reason and the senses. Its secondary aim, after the prime end of manifesting the human spirit in beautiful form has been accomplished, is to give tranquil and innocent enjoyment.

II.

From what has gone before, it will be seen that no human being can make or mould a beautiful form without incorporating in that form some

portion of the human mind, however crude, however elementary. In other words, there is no work of art without a theme, without a motive, without a subject. The presentation of that theme, that motive, that subject, is the final end of art. The art is good or bad according as the subject has been well or ill presented, consistently with the laws of beauty special to the art itself. Thus we obtain two standards for æsthetic criticism. We judge a statue, for example, both by the sculptor's intellectual grasp upon his subject, and also by his technical skill and sense of beauty. In a picture of the Last Judgment by Fra Angelico we say that the bliss of the righteous has been more successfully treated than the torments of the wicked, because the former has been better understood, although the painter's skill in each is equal. In the Perseus of Cellini we admire the sculptor's spirit, finish of execution, and originality of design, while we deplore that want of sympathy with the heroic character which makes his type of physical beauty slightly vulgar and his facial expression vacuous.

If the phrase "Art for art's sake" has any meaning, this meaning is simply that the artist, having chosen a theme, thinks exclusively in working at it of technical dexterity or the quality of beauty. There are many inducements for the artist thus to narrow his function, and for the critic

to assist him by applying the canons of a soulless connoisseurship to his work ; for the conception of the subject is but the starting-point in art-production, and the artist's difficulties and triumphs as a craftsman lie in the region of technicalities. He knows, moreover, that however deep or noble his idea may be, his work of art will be worthless if it fail in skill or be devoid of beauty. What converts a thought into a statue or a picture, is the form found for it ; and so the form itself seems all-important. The artist, therefore, too easily imagines that he may neglect his theme ; that a fine piece of colouring, a well-balanced composition, or, as Cellini put it, "*un bel corpo ignudo*," is enough. And this is especially easy in an age which reflects much upon the arts, and pursues them with enthusiasm, while its deeper thoughts and sentiments are not of the kind which translate themselves readily into artistic form. But, after all, a fine piece of colouring, a well-balanced composition, a sonorous stanza, a learned essay in counterpoint, are not enough. They are all excellent good things, yielding delight to the artistic sense and instruction to the student. Yet when we think of the really great statues, pictures, poems, music of the world, we find that these are really great because of something more—and that more is their theme, their presentation of a noble portion of the human soul. Artists and art-

students may be satisfied with perfect specimens of a craftsman's skill, independent of his theme ; but the mass of men will not be satisfied ; and it is as wrong to suppose that art exists for artists and art-students, as to talk of art for art's sake. Art exists for humanity. Art transmutes thought and feeling into terms of beautiful form. Art is great and lasting in proportion as it appeals to the human consciousness at large, presenting to it portions of itself in adequate and lovely form.

. III.

It was necessary in the first place firmly to apprehend the truth that the final end of all art is the presentation of a spiritual content ; it is necessary in the next place to remove confusions by considering the special circumstances of the several arts.

Each art has its own vehicle of expression. What it can present and how it can present it, depends upon the nature of this vehicle. Thus, though architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry, meet upon the common ground of spiritualised experience—though the works of art produced by the architect, sculptor, painter, musician, poet, emanate from the spiritual nature of the race, are coloured by the spiritual nature of the men who make them, and express what is spiritual in humanity under concrete forms invented for

them by the artist—yet it is certain that all of these arts do not deal exactly with the same portions of this common material in the same way or with the same results. Each has its own department. Each exhibits qualities of strength and weakness special to itself. To define these several departments, to explain the relation of these several vehicles of presentation to the common subject-matter, is the next step in criticism.

IV.

Of the fine arts, architecture alone subserves utility. We build for use. But the geometrical proportions which the architect observes, contain the element of beauty and powerfully influence the soul. Into the language of arch and aisle and colonnade, of cupola and façade and pediment, of spire and vault, the architect translates emotion, vague perhaps but deep, mute but unmistakable. When we say that a building is sublime or graceful, frivolous or stern, we mean that sublimity or grace, frivolity or sternness, is inherent in it. The emotions connected with these qualities are inspired in us when we contemplate it, and are presented to us by its form. Whether the architect deliberately aimed at the sublime or graceful—whether the dignified serenity of the Athenian genius sought to express itself in the Parthenon, and the mysticism of mediæval Christianity in the

gloom of Chartres Cathedral—whether it was Renaissance paganism which gave its mundane pomp and glory to S. Peter's, and the refined selfishness of royalty its specious splendour to the palace of Versailles—need not be curiously questioned. The fact that we are impelled to raise these points, that architecture more almost than any art connects itself indissolubly with the life, the character, the moral being of a nation and an epoch, proves that we are justified in bringing it beneath our general definition of the arts. In a great measure because it subserves utility, and is therefore dependent upon the necessities of life, does architecture present to us through form the human spirit. Comparing the palace built by Giulio Romano for the Dukes of Mantua with the contemporary castle of a German prince, we cannot fail at once to comprehend the difference of spiritual conditions, as these displayed themselves in daily life, which then separated Italy from the Teutonic nations. But this is not all. Spiritual quality in the architect himself finds clear expression in his work. Coldness combined with violence marks Brunelleschi's churches; a certain suavity and well-bred taste the work of Bramante; while Michel Angelo exhibits wayward energy in his Library of S. Lorenzo, and Amadeo self-abandonment to fancy in his Lombard chapels. I have

chosen examples from one nation and one epoch in order that the point I seek to make, the demonstration of a spiritual quality in buildings, may be fairly stated.

V.

Sculpture and painting distinguish themselves from the other fine arts by the imitation of concrete existences in nature. They copy the bodies of men and animals, the aspects of the world around us, and the handiwork of mankind. Yet, in so far as they are rightly arts, they do not make imitation an object in itself. The grapes of Zeuxis at which birds pecked, the painted dog at which a cat's hair bristles—if such grapes or such a dog were ever put on canvas—are but evidences of the artist's skill, not of his faculty as artist. These two plastic, or, as I prefer to call them, figurative arts, use their imitation of the external world for the expression, the presentation of internal, spiritual things. The human form is for them the outward symbol of the inner human spirit, and their power of presenting spirit is limited by the means at their disposal.

Sculpture employs stone, wood, clay, the precious metals, to model forms, detached and independent, or raised upon a flat surface in relief. Its domain is the whole range of human character and consciousness, in so far as these can be indi-

cated by fixed facial expression, by physical type, and by attitude. If we dwell for an instant on the greatest historical epoch of sculpture, we shall understand the domain of this art in its range and limitation. At a certain point of Greek development the Hellenic Pantheon began to be translated by the sculptors into statues; and when the genius of the Greeks expired in Rome, the cycle of their psychological conceptions had been exhaustively presented through this medium. During that long period of time, the most delicate gradations of human personality, divinised, idealised, were submitted to the contemplation of the consciousness which gave them being, in appropriate types. Strength and swiftness, massive force and airy lightness, contemplative repose and active energy, voluptuous softness and refined grace, intellectual sublimity and lascivious seductiveness—the whole rhythm of qualities which can be typified by bodily form—were analysed, selected, combined in various degrees, to incarnate the religious conceptions of Zeus, Aphrodite, Herakles, Dionysus, Pallas, Fauns and Satyrs, Nymphs of woods and waves, Tritons, the genius of Death, heroes and hunters, lawgivers and poets, presiding deities of minor functions, man's lustful appetites and sensual needs. All that men think, or do, or are, or wish for, or imagine in this world, had found exact corporeal equivalents. Not phy-

siognomy alone, but all the portions of the body upon which the habits of the animating soul are wont to stamp themselves, were studied and employed as symbolism. Uranian Aphrodite was distinguished from her Pandemic sister by chastened, lust-repelling loveliness. The muscles of Herakles were more ponderous than the tense sinews of Achilles. The Hermes of the palæstra bore a torso of majestic depth; the Hermes who carried messages from heaven had limbs alert for movement. The brows of Zeus inspired awe; the breasts of Dionysus breathed delight.

A race accustomed, as the Greeks were, to read this symbolism, accustomed, as the Greeks were, to note the individuality of naked form, had no difficulty in interpreting the language of sculpture. Nor is there even now much difficulty in the task. Our surest guide to the subject of a bas-relief or statue is study of the physical type considered as symbolical of spiritual quality. From the fragment of a torso the true critic can say whether it belongs to the athletic or the erotic species. A limb of Bacchus differs from a limb of Poseidon. The whole psychological conception of Aphrodite Pandemos enters into every muscle, every joint, no less than into her physiognomy, her hair, her attitude.

There is, however, a limit to the domain of sculpture. This art deals most successfully with personified generalities. It is also strong in the

presentation of incarnate character. But when it attempts to tell a story, we often seek in vain its meaning. Battles of Amazons or Centaurs upon bas-reliefs, indeed, are unmistakable. The subject is indicated here by some external sign. The group of Laocoön appeals at once to a reader of Virgil, and the divine vengeance of Leto's children upon Niobe is manifest in the Uffizzi marbles. But who are the several heroes of the Æginetan pediment, and what was the subject of the Pheidian statues on the Parthenon? Do the three graceful figures of a bas-relief which exists at Naples and in the Villa Albani, represent Orpheus, Hermes, and Eurydice, or Antiope and her two sons? Was the winged and sworded genius upon the Ephesus column meant for a genius of Death or a genius of Love?

This dimness of significance indicates the limitation of sculpture, and inclines some of those who feel its charm to assert that the sculptor seeks to convey no intellectual meaning, that he is satisfied with the creation of beautiful form. There is an element of good sense in this revolt against the faith which holds that art is nothing but a mode of spiritual presentation. Truly the artist aims at producing beauty, is satisfied if he conveys delight. But it is impossible to escape from the certainty that, while he is creating forms of beauty, he means something,

feels something; and that something, that theme for which he finds the form, is part of the world's spiritual heritage. Only the crudest works of figurative art, capricci and arabesques, have no intellectual content; and even these are good in so far as they convey the playfulness of fancy.

VI.

Painting employs colours upon surfaces—walls, panels, canvas. What has been said about sculpture will apply in a great measure to this art. The human form, the world around us, the works of man's hands, are represented in painting, not for their own sake merely, but with the view of bringing thought, feeling, action, home to the consciousness of the spectator from the artist's consciousness on which they have been impressed. Painting can tell a story better than sculpture, can represent more complicated feelings, can suggest thoughts of a subtler intricacy. Through colour, it can play, like music, directly on powerful but vague emotion. It is deficient in the fulness and roundness of concrete reality. A statue stands before us, the soul incarnate in palpable form, fixed and frozen for eternity. The picture is a reflection cast upon a magic glass; not less permanent, but reduced to a shadow of palpable reality. To follow these distinctions farther would be alien from the present purpose. It is enough to repeat that, within their several spheres, according

to their several strengths and weaknesses, both sculpture and painting present the spirit to us only as the spirit shows itself immersed in things of sense. The light of a lamp enclosed within an alabaster vase is still lamplight, though shorn of lustre and toned to coloured softness. Even thus the spirit, immersed in things of sense presented to us by the figurative arts, is still spirit, though diminished in its intellectual clearness and invested with hues not its own. To fashion that alabaster form of art with utmost skill, to make it beautiful, to render it transparent, is the artist's function. But he will have failed of the highest if the light within burns dim, or if he gives the world a lamp in which no spiritual flame is lighted.

VII.

Music transports us to a different region. Like architecture, it imitates nothing. It uses pure sound, and sound of the most wholly artificial kind—so artificial that the musical sounds of one race are unmusical, and therefore unintelligible, to another. Like architecture, music relies upon mathematical proportions. Unlike architecture, music serves no utility. It is the purest art of pleasure—the truest paradise and playground of the spirit. It has less power than painting, even less power than sculpture, to tell a story or to communicate an idea. For we must remember that when music is

married to words, the words, and not the music, reach our thinking faculty. And yet, in spite of all this, music presents man's spirit to itself through form. The domain of the spirit over which music reigns, is emotion—not defined emotion, not feeling even so generally defined as jealousy or anger—but those broad bases of man's being out of which emotions spring, defining themselves through action into this or that set type of feeling. Architecture, we have noticed, is so connected with specific modes of human existence, that from its main examples we can reconstruct the life of men who used it. Sculpture and painting, by limiting their presentation to the imitation of external things, have all the help which experience and association render. The mere artificiality of music's vehicle separates it from life and makes its message untranslatable. Nevertheless, this very disability under which it labours is the secret of its extraordinary potency.

To expect clear definition from music—the definition which belongs to poetry—would be absurd. The sphere of music is in sensuous perception; the sphere of poetry is in intelligence. Music, dealing with pure sound, must always be vaguer in significance than poetry, which deals with words. Nevertheless its effect upon the sentient subject may be more intense and penetrating for this very reason. We cannot fail to understand

what words are intended to convey ; we may very easily interpret in a hundred different ways the message of sound. But this is not because words are wider in their reach and more alive ; rather because they are more limited, more stereotyped, more dead. They symbolise something precise and unmistakable ; but this precision is itself attenuation of the something symbolised. The exact value of the counter is better understood when it is a word than when it is a chord, because all that a word conveys has already become a thought, while all that musical sounds convey remains within the region of emotion which has not been intellectualised.* Poetry touches emotion through the thinking faculty. If music reaches the thinking faculty at all, it is through fibres of emotion. But emotion, when it has become thought, has already lost a portion of its force, and has taken to itself a something alien to its nature. Therefore the message of music can never rightly be translated into words. It is the very largeness and vividness of the sphere of simple feeling which makes its symbolical counterpart in sound so seeming vague. But in spite of this incontestable defect of seeming vagueness, an emotion expressed by music is nearer to our sentient self, if we have ears to take it in, than the same emotion limited by language. It is

* "Thought," said Novalis somewhere, "is only a pale, desiccated emotion."

intenser, it is more immediate, as compensation for being less intelligible, less unmistakable in meaning. It is an infinite, an indistinct, where each consciousness defines and sets a limitary form.

Nothing intervenes between the musical work of art and the fibres of the sentient being it immediately thrills. We do not seek to say what music means. We feel the music. And if a man should pretend that the music has not passed beyond his ears, has communicated nothing but a musical delight, he simply tells us that he has not felt music. The ancients on this point were wiser than some moderns when, without pretending to assign an intellectual significance to music, they held it for an axiom that one type of music bred one type of character, another type another. A change in the music of a state, wrote Plato, will be followed by changes in its constitution. It is of the utmost importance, said Aristotle, to provide in education for the use of the ennobling and the fortifying moods. These philosophers knew that music creates a spiritual world, in which the spirit cannot live and move without contracting habits of emotion. In this vagueness of significance but intensity of feeling lies the magic of music. A melody occurs to the composer, which he certainly connects with no act of the reason, which he is probably unconscious of connecting with any movement of his feeling, but which

nevertheless is the form in sound of an emotional mood. When he reflects upon the melody secreted thus impromptu, he is aware, as we learn from his own lips, that this work has correspondence with emotion. Beethoven calls one symphony *Heroic*, another *Pastoral*; of the opening of another he says, "Fate knocks at the door." Mozart sets comic words to the mass-music of a friend, in order to mark his sense of its inaptitude for religious sentiment. All composers use phrases like *Maestoso*, *Pomposo*, *Allegro*, *Lagrimoso*, *Con Fuoco*, to express the general complexion of the mood their music ought to represent.

VIII.

Before passing to poetry, it may be well to turn aside and consider two subordinate arts, which deserve a place in any system of æsthetics. These are dancing and acting. Dancing uses the living human form, and presents feeling or action, the passions and the deeds of men, in artificially educated movements of the body. The element of beauty it possesses, independently of the beauty of the dancer, is rhythm. Acting or the art of mimicry presents the same subject-matter, no longer under the conditions of fixed rhythm, but as an ideal reproduction of reality. The actor is what he represents, and the element of beauty in his art is perfection of realisation. It is his duty as

an artist to show us Orestes or Othello, not perhaps exactly as Othello and Orestes were, but as the essence of their tragedies, ideally incorporate in action, ought to be. The actor can do this in dumb show. Some of the greatest actors of the ancient world were mimes. But he usually interprets a poet's thought, and attempts to present an artistic conception in a secondary form of art, which has for its advantage his own personality in play.

IX.

The last of the fine arts is literature; or, in the narrower sphere of which it will be well to speak here only, is poetry. Poetry employs words in fixed rhythms, which we call metres. Only a small portion of its effect is derived from the beauty of its sound. It appeals to the sense of hearing far less immediately than music does. It makes no appeal to the eyesight, and takes no help from the beauty of colour. It produces no palpable, tangible object. But language being the storehouse of all human experience, language being the medium whereby spirit communicates with spirit in affairs of life, the vehicle which transmits to us the thoughts and feelings of the past, and on which we rely for continuing our present to the future, it follows that, of all the arts, poetry soars highest, flies widest, and is most at home in the region of the spirit. What poetry lacks of sensuous fulness,

it more than balances by intellectual intensity. Its significance is unmistakable, because it employs the very material men use in their exchange of thoughts and correspondence of emotions. To the bounds of its empire there is no end. It embraces in its own more abstract being all the arts. By words it does the work in turn of architecture, sculpture, painting, music. It is the metaphysic of the fine arts. Philosophy finds place in poetry ; and life itself, refined to its last utterance, hangs trembling on this thread which joins our earth to heaven, this bridge between experience and the realms where unattainable and imperceptible will have no meaning.

If we are right in defining art as the manifestation of the human spirit to man by man in beautiful form, poetry, more incontestably than any other art, fulfils this definition and enables us to gauge its accuracy. For words are the spirit, manifested to itself in symbols with no sensual alloy. Poetry is therefore the ^vpresentation, through words, of life and all that life implies. Perception, emotion, thought, action, find in descriptive, lyrical, reflective, dramatic, and epical poetry their immediate apocalypse. In poetry we are no longer puzzled with problems as to whether art has or has not of necessity a spiritual content. There cannot be any poetry whatsoever without a spiritual meaning of some sort : good or bad, moral, immoral, or non-

moral, obscure or lucid, noble or ignoble, slight or weighty — such distinctions do not signify. In poetry we are not met by questions whether the poet intended to convey a meaning when he made it. Quite meaningless poetry (as some critics would fain find melody quite meaningless, or a statue meaningless, or a Venetian picture meaningless) is a contradiction in terms. In poetry, life, or a portion of life, lives again, resuscitated and presented to our mental faculty through art. The best poetry is that which reproduces the most of life, or its intensest moments. Therefore the extensive species of the drama and the epic, the intensive species of the lyric, have been ever held in highest esteem. Only a paradoxical critic maintains the thesis that poetry is excellent in so far as it assimilates the vagueness of music, or estimates a poet by his power of translating sense upon the border-land of nonsense into melodious words. Where poetry falls short in the comparison with other arts, is in the quality of form-giving, in the quality of sensuous concreteness. Poetry can only present forms to the mental eye and to the intellectual sense, stimulate the physical senses by indirect suggestion. Therefore dramatic poetry, the most complicated kind of poetry, relies upon the actor; and lyrical poetry, the intensest kind of poetry, seeks the aid of music. But these comparative deficiencies are overbalanced, for all the

highest purposes of art, by the width and depth, the intelligibility and power, the flexibility and multitudinous associations of language. The other arts are limited in what they utter. There is nothing which has entered into the life of man which poetry cannot express. Poetry says everything in man's own language to the mind. The other arts appeal imperatively, each in its own region, to man's senses; and the mind receives art's message by the help of symbols from the world of sense. Poetry lacks this immediate appeal to sense. But the elixir which it offers to the mind, its quintessence extracted from all things of sense, reacts through intellectual perception upon all the faculties that make men what they are.

X.

I used a metaphor in one of the foregoing paragraphs to indicate the presence of the vital spirit, the essential element of thought or feeling, in the work of art. I said it radiated through the form, as lamplight through an alabaster vase. Now the skill of the artist is displayed in modelling that vase, in giving it shape, rich and rare, and fashioning its curves with subtlest workmanship. In so far as he is a craftsman, the artist's pains must be bestowed upon this precious vessel of the animating theme. In so far as he has power over beauty, he must exert it in this plastic act. It

is here that he displays dexterity ; here that he creates ; here that he separates himself from other men who think and feel. The poet, more perhaps than any other artist, needs to keep this steadily in view ; for words being our daily vehicle of utterance, it may well chance that the alabaster vase of language should be hastily or trivially modelled. This is the true reason why "neither gods nor men nor the columns either suffer mediocrity in singers." Upon the poet it is specially incumbent to see that he has something rare to say and some rich mode of saying it. The figurative arts need hardly be so cautioned. They run their risk in quite a different direction. For sculptor and for painter, the danger is lest he should think that alabaster vase his final task. He may too easily be satisfied with moulding a beautiful but empty form.

ON THE RELATION OF ART TO SCIENCE AND MORALITY.

I.

THE most singular phenomenon of language in its relation to thought is our inability to define the words expressive of ideas by which we are principally influenced in life. We cannot make satisfactory definitions of God, goodness, truth, beauty, poetry, love. The prudent man abstains from definitions in such cases, feeling sure that his audience, if they are capable of listening to his argument, will be provided with general notions sufficient to make his meaning clear.

Perhaps the reason why no satisfactory definitions can be given of goodness, beauty, truth, is that these ideas blend in our spiritual nature, so that, when we seek to distinguish them, we violate the unity of our higher self.

Yet a man may be permitted at times to play this impossible game of definitions as a kind of intellectual pastime, recognising its inefficiency, but

acknowledging suggestive and stimulative value in the sport.

We may say, for instance, that goodness is the quality in things and living creatures which makes them perfect in their several kinds, and adapts them to their special functions. It is a quality of essence.

We may say that beauty is the quality in things and living creatures which makes them delightful to our sensibility. It is inseparable from some mode of presentation. It is a quality, not of essence, but of aspect and appearance.

We may say that truth is conformity to what is actual and capable of demonstration; or subjectively, that is the exact apprehension by our mind of facts as they really are, whether these be good or bad, beautiful or ugly. It is a quality, not of aspect, but of essence.

Still we know that there is no beauty worthy of the name without truth and without a certain sort of goodness. We feel that goodness is the highest kind of truth, and that truth is good. We recognise that every truth, once demonstrated, has a right to be called beautiful. It is only needful to fix attention on the contrary ideas of badness, ugliness, falsity, in order to perceive that their intrusion into the sphere of the good, the beautiful, the true, vitiates our radical conception of those virtues. Beauty cannot be bad; goodness cannot

be false ; truth cannot be ugly—and so on, ringing all the changes on their combinations.

From the most abstract point of view, goodness, beauty, truth are in reality inseparable. Religion presents us with an ideal of the universal Being, in whom they coexist without one flaw or note of difference. This is religion's way of presenting to our minds the ideal unity of our own nature, the type of self to which humanity aspires.

But we immediately divide them in our understanding. It is the function of the intelligence to decompose abstractions. Intelligence deals with concrete things ; and the concrete is always the differentiated. Thus we use the word *good* in different senses. We speak, for instance, of good iron, a good horse, good beef ; but we reserve the name *goodness* for the dominant excellence of human beings, moral virtue. To this quality we assign ethics ; to truth, science ; to beauty, æsthetics.

In ethics, right conduct is good in itself, beautiful to the imagination, true to our apprehension of permanent relations. In æsthetics, a fine work of art is beautiful to the percipient sense, good by its thoroughness of execution, true by exactitude of delineation. In science, a theory is true because it accounts for the facts and is capable of demonstration, beautiful by reason of its lucidity, good because it can be depended on and fulfils its purpose.

So far we may apply the terms of each province to the subject-matter of the others. This must not, however, blind us to the fact that morality, art, and science—which are severally concerned with goodness, beauty, and truth—require to be considered separately. Each exists for itself, notwithstanding those reciprocal affinities, to which language testifies, and which are deeply grounded in our nature. Thus morality holds up for admiration many things which we recognise as essentially good, but which can only be called beautiful by a metaphor—such as suffering a horrid death for conscience' sake or the discharge of distasteful duties. Art, on the contrary, may produce forms which are physically beautiful, but which stimulate appetites or suggest thoughts alien to moral rightness. Science, again, is indifferent alike to beauty and to moral goodness. It seeks the law of ugliness, disease, and crime, no less than the law of beauty, health, and virtue. Their ends in like manner differ. Morality tends to right conduct, art to noble pleasure, science to knowledge and control of facts. Of the three, morality is by far the most complex, because it is concerned with nothing less than the whole nature of man—ourselves—the most vitally important, and also the most inscrutable matter for inquiry. For the same reason it is also the most undetermined of the three; in its province nothing

X

has, as yet, been reduced to the certainty of law. Therefore it relies on religion for the sanction, and on jurisprudence for the enforcement, of its ruling principles. Standing in a certain sense between science and art, it derives information from the former, and exercises supervision over the latter. And forasmuch as right conduct is more precious to man than either noble pleasure or the knowledge and control of facts, morality has to provide that neither the scientific pursuit of knowledge nor the æsthetical supply of pleasure shall compromise the rectitude of the will in action. Morality, in fact, as Aristotle said long ago, is architectonic; and goodness, for human nature, is the queen over truth and beauty.

II.

At the end of His seven days' labour of creation, "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good." It was not *good for nothing*, nor merely *good for something*, but *good in itself*, as corresponding to its destined ends and uses. This goodness of the world included and implied its truth and beauty also. For the infinite mind it was enough to call the world by that noblest name of good. But man's understanding acts like a prism, which breaks white light into its component colours. We are obliged to regard the outer world from theoretically

separate points of view. We look at things (1) in themselves, (2) in their aspects and appearances, (3) in their relation to utility and purpose, (4) in their relation to conduct. The attempt to ascertain what they are leads to science. The attempt to seize their aspects and appearances leads to art. When we consider their qualities with reference to use and purpose, this calls into action practical wisdom. Viewed from the point of view of conduct, they suggest morality. A similar process of disintegration, due to man's partial power of mental vision, may be traced in our ways of dealing with the inner world of our own selves. Psychology scrutinises the phenomena of mind without reference to conduct. Morality erects standards of duty and of social utility; it is not content with facts and phenomena; it sees them in relation to ulterior ends. Art regards physical form, the aspects of human action, the appearances of passion and emotion; it does not care for scientific explanations of what and how and why; it is not primarily concerned with moral quality; it is content with impressions and the presentation of impressions.

Many things are beautiful in art which morality condemns, which have no practical utility, which science passes over in a sentence of three words. Many things are morally admirable, practically valuable, scientifically of enthralling interest, which

leave art cold, indifferent, disdainful. Art is the expression of man's delight in nature and his sympathy with human joys and sufferings. Science is the expression of man's curiosity, the outcome of his analytical investigation. Practical wisdom is the expression of man's will and power to utilise things in his own interest. Morality is the expression of man's self-consciousness and judgment as to the right and wrong of conduct, governed by subjective qualities inherent in a race or epoch.

Reality, and consequently truth, is involved in all these several ways of regarding the outer and the inner world. The aspects and appearances of things, their practical utilities and values, their ethical and social relations, are no less facts for us than are their essence, component elements, manners of behaviour. But science has primarily to do with things as they are, art with their aspects and appearances, practical wisdom with their utilities, morality with their relation to the spiritual organism. It is because we cannot see the whole at once that we divide in this way.

III.

Art, which deals mainly with aspects and appearances, and which aims at noble pleasure, has a special duty to be mindful of the admonitions given by her sisters. She seeks to present the

outer and the inner worlds to human sensibilities; she must do this truthfully, she must do it wholesomely, at the risk of wounding or insulting sensibility. She claims to reveal new joys; she brings to light permanent and inexhaustible treasures of loveliness, which the material universe and the soul of man contain, but which elude the eyes of those who have not caught their aspects in her magic mirror. How can she fulfil this function if she sees falsely or feels basely? The more we reflect, the more are we led to the conviction that art cannot neglect the correspondences between beauty and truth, beauty and goodness, beauty and use. The more we drive issues to their ultimate conclusion, the more clear will it appear that beauty, which deserves that name, cannot exist without truth, goodness, serviceable quality. In proportion as beauty includes these elements, it is vigorous, enduring, vital, universal, for all times and nations. In proportion as it excludes them, it is illusory, phantasmal, perishable, partial to a race or moment.

Nevertheless, there is no denying the fact that art, through this appeal to sensibility, no less than through the pursuit of pleasure as an aim, contains an element of weakness, from which morality and science are free. There are ignoble pleasures, and sensibility is sometimes morbid. Art, if she chooses, can provide the former and can gratify the latter, without quitting the domain of beauty. She can

turn herself at will from an Egeria or a Pythia into a Circe or a Siren.

x x y Art, again, has nothing in herself to discipline the moral nature of her servants. They bring to her the spirits which they had, and she responds to them or fails to touch them.

✓ A great artist never works from a consciously scientific or a consciously ethical point of view. He has no didactic purpose; he does not aim at proving anything. He is satisfied with making something; and this something may be of very various sorts in regard to truth and goodness. It remains certain, however, that he is unable to make anything without exercising the spirit which is in him; and this spirit involves principles which are proper to both science and morality.

Architecture, to begin with, rests upon geometrical proportions. Music, which Sir Thomas Browne styled "a sensible fit of that harmony which intellectually sounds in the ears of God," is dependent upon mathematical ratios. The figurative arts seek after correctness of design, correctness of perspective, correctness of tone. They need truth of delineation, "conformity to what is real," "exact apprehension of facts." So far as they are imitative, veracity is one of their cardinal virtues. To this extent, then, art partakes of the scientific spirit.

When we come to consider the function of the

arts in history, their social and educational importance, together with the thoughts and feelings they express, the point of contact between them and morality is even more apparent. I have elsewhere insisted on the fact that no work of art is absolutely unqualified by moral tone of one sort or another, seeing that all such works are the products of a moralised personality. The mode of handling and treatment, what we call style, communicates, dimly perhaps, but certainly, something from the artist's nature to the sensibility of the percipient. The same face painted by Greuze, Raphael, and Lionardo da Vinci would affect us with very different sentiments. The same torso modelled by Pheidias, Cellini, Gian Bologna, and Michel Angelo would awake widely dissimilar sensations. The same musical theme handled by Mozart, Cherubini, Mendelssohn, Chopin, and Rossini would transport us into diverse regions of emotion. Thus, at the very beginning of the matter, each artist exercises a specific moral influence, without deliberate intention, by the mere display of personality.

If we proceed further, and regard the subject-matter of the arts, this connection with morality becomes still more marked. Except in purely decorative work, art cannot escape from conveying a meaning of some sort. It may therefore be used, and it has been used, to inculcate religion and to stimulate licentiousness, to exhibit the strength of

heroes and the constancy of martyrs, to reveal the seductions of the senses or the poignant fascination of bloodthirsty passions. We need hardly mention poetry in this discussion; for poetry, by its command of words, embraces the whole sphere of human nature. Not only all the acts of men and women, but all their thoughts and emotions, their aspirations toward a better state of being, their affinities with brutes, their capacity to sink below the brutes into devildom, belong to verbal expression. For this reason Milton regarded poetry as the fundamental instrument in education. Logic and rhetoric, he observes, have their important place in mental training; "to which poetry should be made subsequent, or indeed rather precedent, as being less subtle and fine, but more simple, sensuous, and passionate." Poetry, to quote another phrase from Milton, "with a solid and treatable smoothness paints out and describes" whatsoever is presented in abstract form by theology, philosophy, history, logic, and rhetoric. From poetry, therefore, through its simplicity, its sensuous fulness, and its passionate appeal, commanding moral impressions for good or evil have to be expected. But enough has been already said upon this topic in another essay. It is more to the present purpose to point out that even those arts which seem most widely removed from life exert their toning influence upon the moral consciousness.

Music, for example, inculcates nothing, tells no story, utters no propositions which provoke assent or dissent. Yet music, in spite of the insidious vagueness of its language, in spite of the fact that its influences are rarely seized or analysed, has a potent charm for tuning our susceptibilities to divers issues. Few of those who have read Plato will dispute what he records about the tonic value of the Dorian mood, as compared with the enervation of the Mixo-Lydian and the frenzy of the Phrygian. To demur that we have only vague notions about the Greek moods avails nothing. A fugue of Bach or the choruses of *Israel in Egypt*, Rossini's melodies and Strauss's waltzes, the overture to *Tannhäuser* and the pibroch of a Highland clan—such terms of comparison will suit our purpose just as well as those implied in the obscure phraseology of antique writers on Greek music. Dryden seized the truth and roughly expressed it in his ode for St. Cecilia's Day, styled "Alexander's Feast."

Architecture, again, teaches nothing, tells no story, offers no allurements to the senses, imitates nothing. Such immediate appeals to the sensibilities it leaves to the figurative arts. Yet men and women who are susceptible to their surroundings cannot fail to be toned to different moods, according as they dwell habitually in a Gothic castle, in a Genoese palace, or in a *rococo*.

villa of the Regency—according as they worship habitually in Chartres Cathedral, in a Jesuit church with its gimcracks, or in an English Methodist chapel with its arid grimness. I admit that it is easy to over-estimate the possible influence of these material environments. Some people seem unimpressible by them. Yet experience leads me to think that there are numerous human beings in each nation who do receive powerful and permanent tone from the impressions communicated to them by architecture.

Something similar to Seneca's remark on landscape and climate holds good here. "*Effeminat animos amœnitas nimia, nec dubie aliquid ad corrumpendum vigorem potest regio. Non tantum corpori sed etiam moribus salubrem locum eligere debemus.*" "Excessive delightfulness emasculates our mental disposition; nor is there any doubt that the place we live in can do something to undermine the vital forces. Not merely for our body, but also for our moral character, we ought to select a wholesome residence."

IV.

The conclusion we thus reach is that if art, on its formal and technical side, partakes of the scientific spirit in all that concerns its mental content and influence upon our nature, it no less certainly partakes of the ethical spirit. Yet art has its privileges and rights and independence.

It is not really a sub-species of Science, nor is it really a sub-species of Ethic. To describe it by such terms would be to strain language and to confuse thought. ✓

All that we are justified in saying on this point is that art cannot ignore morality, any more than it can ignore truth. To claim unqualified independence for it would show a radical misconception of its nature. ✓

It would be still more foolish to maintain that vice is the natural soil of artistic genius, or the manure which stimulates it to productive energy. Owing to the primal cult of beauty, the method of sensuous presentation, and the purpose of communicating pleasure, which we have recognised as proper to art—owing to these conditions of its being, art may indeed appear to have little or nothing to do with virtue; and there have undoubtedly been periods of the world's history when it has flourished in the midst of much licentiousness.

The Italian Renaissance was one of these periods. A thorough-going inquiry into all the aspects of that complex era exposes the historian to misconception. He has to face the reproach of regarding art and beauty as flowers of vice and corruption, simply because he dwells upon the patent fact that Italy reached her highest point of artistic development at a time when

political institutions were decaying, social morality was deteriorating, and religious emotions were refrigerating. There is no denying this fact; and in considering the relation of the arts to ethics, it ought to be taken into account. Art of a certain sort can indubitably prosper under conditions which are not favourable to personal or national morality.

Yet, if we look somewhat more narrowly into the factors of this problem, we shall discover that in Italy there existed no causal link between moral enfeeblement and æsthetic vigour. On the contrary, the best work of that brilliant period was accomplished during years which still retained the glow of mediæval faith and the verve of republican enthusiasm. What survived of force and goodness in the nation, not the insidious encroachments of vice and pusillanimity, enabled painting to flourish between Giotto and Buonarroti. It was the robust science and the desperate patriotism of Machiavelli, not his disbelief in human excellence and his paradoxical conception of political craft, which gave lustre to the "Principe," the "History of Florence," and the "Discourses upon Livy." A little later, Italy, debauched by luxury, degraded in her own eyes by foreign conquest, numbed by the torpor of the Catholic Reaction, ceased to produce even respectable pictures, neglected the culture she had created for Europe, allowed her printing-presses

to stand idle, and drowned her literature in floods of academical rhetoric.

In addition to this, signs are not wanting in the Italian art of the Renaissance period which confirm us in believing that great and lasting monuments of human genius imply a sterling moral temper in their makers. After all accounts are reckoned, Dante remains unique among Italians, the one supreme poet of his race. Boccaccio's licentiousness, which leavens and gives form to Renaissance poetry and fiction, condemned that voluminous literature, with the single exception of the "*Orlando Furioso*," to artistic mediocrity. Not merely because they are immoral, but because they are not really first-rate of their kind, we could afford to abandon the narrative poems and novels of the Renaissance without a sigh. Posterity has already consigned to oblivion the rhetorical compositions of the Humanists, the odes and sonnets of Academical craftsmen. We note with curiosity and wonder that, after Petrarch, few tolerable lyrics were composed by Italians; that the nation proved itself incapable of tragedy; that it could not, in spite of all its efforts, produce an epic. It has been my duty to read thousands of Renaissance compositions, in all kinds of verse; but I would barter the myriad polished lines of Bembo, Molza, Sannazzarro, and the rest of that sort, for a few rough stanzas of Michel Angelo

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x
and Campanella. Why is this? Not because the former are vicious and the latter virtuous; it would indeed be difficult to prove that indictment; but because Michel Angelo and Campanella were men of forcible character, and wrote what is profitable to men in all ages; and of such men there was a lamentable lack in Italy, owing to her ethical deterioration.

So far as it goes, then, the instance of the Italian Renaissance tends to establish the position that noble art is only compatible with sound morality. But there is another point of view from which the seeming paradox of that epoch has to be regarded. Its eminent art was mainly plastic—not literary, but pictorial, sculpturesque, with multiform expansion into minor channels of utility and service, as in house-building, furniture, plate, armour, weapons, woodwork, decorative embroideries, medals, glass, mosaic, enamel, pottery, and so forth. This kind of art, unlike poetry, is only remotely connected with ideas; and the refinement it implies is not inconsistent with barbarity, with profligacy, with political decadence. Granting, then, that the Italians were cruel, cunning, licentious, incapable of warfare, rotten in their public and private morality—ignoring, for the sake of argument, their profound diplomatical ability, their formation of a new intellectual ideal for Europe, their ecclesiastical

predominance in the councils of Catholic Christendom, their inauguration of the modern scientific method—riveting our eyes solely on the fact that art flourished among them at a time when social morality, religion, and patriotism had been weakened—we shall not be surprised to find that it was not great poetry, nor yet great literature of any kind, but such plastic art as I have described which rose to the highest eminence among them. I, for one, am unable to believe that the glory of their plastic and technical art, unrivalled as it is in modern days, could have been attained without noble qualities in the nation. It is my deliberate opinion that so vigorous a manifestation of the human spirit is impossible in wholly somnolent or putrescent stages of the human consciousness. In spite, therefore, of public and private immorality, apparent on the surface of the nation at that period, there must have been present solid and splendid virtues also, if not precisely virtues of the sort which men of our epoch are wont to praise.

When we regard Italian society during the years when this art flourished, we shall find that it lacked cohesion, but that it abounded in salient personalities. It had not the force and toughness of an organised state. On the other hand, it was not animated with a religious enthusiasm, like Islam in its epoch of expansion. Yet it

bred individuals of Cellini's stamp, captains like Giovanni de' Medici and the Strozzi, popes of the calibre of Julius II., scholars as world-famous as Poliziano, thinkers like Bruno and Sarpi, despots of the force of Cosimo de' Medici, saint-like souls of the purity of Carlo Borromeo and Filippo Neri, gentlemen fit to rank with Castiglione, well-tempered spirits of the kith of Contarini, free-lances of the intellect as keen as Aretino. It bred them, not singly, but by hundreds. The atmosphere in which thought lived and moved and had its being was aswarm with them. That atmosphere, uncondensed indeed into a fixed and steady medium, but floating, turbid, circumambient, diversified, was precisely what art needs to thrive in. Compare it with the atmosphere of middle-class respectability, of modern conformity to one lax rule of conduct, of the average decency for which contemporary evening papers clamour! It is clear that art, of the sort which the Italians produced, has little chance here. Being bound to present the stuff of human thought and emotion under sensuous forms, seeking ever fresh manifestations for that subject-matter, art flourishes best where the free play of personality is possible.

Not then in vice and immorality (the weakness of the Renaissance), but in unexampled many-sidedness of human character (the strength of that epoch), must we seek the solution of

the problem offered by Italy in the sixteenth century.

In like manner, it was not from the corruption of Athens, from slavery, paiderastia, hetairaworship, venality, delation, democratic insubordination, that the noble arts and letters of Hellas, the sculpture of Pheidias, the tragedy of Sophocles, the comedy of Aristophanes, the history of Thucydides, the philosophy of Plato emerged. No; but in spite of these things, and regardless of them, from the living well-springs of a highly specialised and powerfully vital human energy, they sprang into imperishable existence.

Let us not deceive ourselves. Art is indissolubly bound up with man's spiritual forces. What we learn from the Italian Renaissance or from the Athens of Socrates is this: that art is able to assert man's moral nature at moments when it seems in other spheres to have been paralysed or vitiated.

REALISM AND IDEALISM.

I.

SOME years ago I visited an exhibition of Italian pictures at Turin. There was not much to arrest attention in the gallery. Yet I remember two small companion panels by the same hand, labelled respectively *L'Ideale* and *Il Reale*. The first of these paintings represented a consumptive, blonde-haired girl of the Teutonic type, in pale drapery, raising her romantic eyes to a watery moonlight sky. She was sitting near a narrow Gothic window, which opened on a garden. From the darkness below sprang cypresses and a tangle of unclassified vegetation in vaporous indistinctness. The second picture introduced the public to a naked woman, flaunting in provocative animalism. She lolled along a bed, with hard light beating on her body, intensified by hangings of a hot red tone. Under the glare of that illumination her flesh shone like copper, smooth as satin; and the blue-black curls upon her shoulders writhed like snakes.

Both of these pictures were ugly ; but while the Ideal was tamely conceived and feebly executed, the Real displayed enthusiasm, joy in the subject, something of the vigour derived from sympathy and from revolt. The artist had evidently studied this symbolic figure from the life, whereas her foil and pendant, the sentimental maiden, was a figment of his scornful fancy. It seemed clear that he intended to caricature the Ideal, and to record his preference for the Real as men find that in some *mauvais lieu*.

Here, then, was an allegory of the antithesis between Idealism and Realism, as these are vulgarly conceived. Idealism, a mawkish phantasm of hectic virginity, of moonshine, violet-scent, and dewdrops. Realism, a brawny bit of carnal actuality, presented with sensual gusto as the truest truth of life and art.

Is there any solid foundation, I asked myself, for this current conception of the antithesis between the Ideal and Real ? Is there at bottom any antagonism between the two terms ? Are they not rather correlated and inextricably interwoven both in nature and in art ? Suppose we concede for the sake of argument that they may be regarded as exclusive, each of the other, are we therefore to assume that Idealism is moonshiny and insipid, Realism meretricious and revolting ? There must surely be some deep misconception of the problem

on both sides. Why have the Idealists exposed their principles to such caricature as this by pretending to dispense with nature? Why do the Realists so confidently assert that nothing has truth in it but what is libidinous or ugly, commonplace or vicious?

In the reality of human nature it is certain that beauty and modesty, the chastity of saints and the severe strength of athletes, the manhood of Regulus and the temperance of Hippolytus, are quite as much in their own place as ugliness and impudicity, the licentiousness of harlots and the flaccid feebleness of debauchees, the effeminacy of Heliogabalus and the untempered lusts of Roderigo Borgia. What we call the intellectual and moral attributes of men are no less real than their appetites and physical needs. The harmony of a sane mind in a sane body is as matter-of-fact as the deformity derived from cramping and distorting limitations. All those things, therefore, to which our nature aspires, and which we name ideal, must be the legitimate sphere of a logical and sober Realism. Nay more, it is just these things which are the most real in life, and which realistic art is consequently bound to represent; for they are the source of strength, and permanence, and progress to the species. Science teaches us convincingly that the superiority of each race in the struggle for existence consists precisely in

its aptitude for the development of virtues. Badness, in one word, is less real than goodness. |

Realism dares not separate itself from the Ideal, because the Ideal is a permanent factor, and the most important factor, in the reality of life. The Ideal is the manifestation of consciousness to itself, the pledge to the race of our existing in a process of development. Evolution shows that life is in continual progress; and progress from one point to another implies (in a highly complex animal like man) the sense of a better to which the being tends; in other words, involves Idealism. How can the realistic artist afford then to exclude so weighty and indestructible an element of his main subject-matter? What indeed has he to do but to seek out and represent the whole reality of human nature, extenuating nothing, setting nothing down in malice? His object is to reach and to express the truth. He may not shirk what is ugly and animal in his fellow-creatures. But he ought not to dote upon these points. Far less ought he to repudiate those select qualities which men in their long struggle with themselves and their environment have gained as the most precious spoils of a continued battle.

Furthermore, it is worth considering whether the artist, if he dares and wishes to escape from Idealism, is able to do so. I am convinced that he cannot, and this conviction emboldens me to

attempt once more the treatment of a threadbare problem.

II.

He must indeed be a bold man who invites the world to listen while he talks about Idealism and Realism. The very terms have an obsolete scholastic flavour, like those famous hobby-horses of the metaphysicians, Subject and Object. Worse even: they suggest the impostures of æsthetic coteries, the sermonising of self-consecrated priests concerning mysteries no mind has clearly grasped. Plain people are not unjustified in turning from such discussions with a shrug of the shoulders and a yawn.

And yet there still remains something to be studied in this hackneyed antithesis. Just as Subject and Object stand for moments in our apperception of the universe, so the Ideal and the Real indicate conditions under which the arts fulfil their function. It is not therefore a hopeless task, though it may demand a sanguine spirit, to throw light upon the correlation of these terms.

I shall attempt to demonstrate that the warfare waged about them in æsthetic schools arises from a false conception of their mutual relations. In the philosophy of Being, Subject and Object are posed as antithetical only to be resumed as the conditions of experience. Even so Idealism and Realism, in the philosophy of Art, denote an

antagonism which is more apparent than actual, and upon the resolution of which in practice excellence depends. Both, in fact, and both together, are present in every effort which we make to reproduce and represent the outer world through art.

In order to gain limitations for the treatment of this topic, I shall here confine myself to Sculpture and Painting. The principles arrived at will be found applicable in some measure to literature. But music and architecture, as is manifest, do not fall immediately within the sphere of these ideas.

Realism, to begin with, forms the substratum and indispensable condition of all figurative art. The very name figurative, which we apply to Sculpture and Painting, indicates that these arts proceed by imitation of external objects, and mainly by imitation of the human form. Now it would be absurd to contend that imitation is the worse for being veracious, the worse for recalling to our minds the imitated thing, or in other words, for being in the right sense realistic. Nobody wants a portrait which is not as precisely like the person represented, as exactly true to that person's entire self, as it can possibly be made. We may want something else besides ; but we demand resemblance as an indispensable quality. Nobody again wants the image of a god or saint which is

not as accurately adequate to the human form in which that godhead or that sanctity might have resided, as knowledge and skill can make it. Whatever else we desire of the image, we shall not think the better of it for being anatomically wrong. In other words, the figurative arts, by the law which makes them imitate, are bound at every step of their progress to be realistic. The painter must depict each object with painstaking attention to its details. He must aim at delineating the caper and the columbine as faithfully as Titian did, armour as accurately as Giorgione, pearls and brocade with the fidelity of John Van Eyck, hands with the subtlety of Lionardo da Vinci, faces with the earnest feeling after character displayed in Raphael's Leo or Velasquez' Philip.

This is the beginning of his task. But he very soon discovers that he cannot imitate things exactly as they are in fact. The reason of this is that the eye and the hand of sculptor or painter are not a photographic camera. They have neither the qualities nor the defects of a machine. In every imitative effort, worthy of the name of art, the human mind has intervened. What is more, this mind has been the mind of an individual, with specific aptitudes for observation, with specific predilections, with certain ways of thinking, seeing, feeling, and selecting, peculiar to himself. No human mind can grasp unmixed reality, except in

the sphere of mathematics. No two men see the same woman or the same tree. Our impressions and perceptions are necessarily coloured by those qualities which make us percipient and impressible individualities, differing each from his neighbour in a thousand minute particulars.

It is precisely at this point, at the very earliest attempt to imitate, that Idealism enters simultaneously with Realism into the arts. The simplest as well as the most complex work contains this element of ideality. For when a man reproduces in art what he sees in nature, he inevitably imports himself into the product. Thus the object and the idea exist as twin-born factors in the merest rough sketch pencilled on a scrap of paper. Strive as he will to keep himself out of the imitation, the man is powerless to do so. The thing imitated has of necessity become the thing imagined, by the act of his transferring its outline to paper.

We may properly compare chiaroscuro drawings with photographs, since in each case the result is a reproduction of form under certain conditions of light and shade without colour. Now, given the same advantage of illumination, chemicals, exposure, and so forth, twenty photographic cameras of equal dimensions and equal excellence will produce almost identical representations of a single model. But set twenty artists of equal skill

in draughtsmanship to make studies from one model, then, though the imitation may in each case be equally faithful, there will be a different intellectual quality, a different spiritual touch, a different appeal to sympathy, a different order of suggestion in each of the twenty drawings. In other words, each of the twenty drawings represents the thing perceived and conceived differently by each of the twenty draughtsmen. Some specific ideality has formed an unavoidable feature of each artist's work, while all have aimed, in like manner, at merely reproducing the object before them.

This is perhaps the simplest way of presenting the truth that Realism and Idealism are as inseparable as body and soul in every product of the figurative arts. In art it is not a machine but a mind which imitates. Nay, even the hand which draws is itself no mechanical instrument, but part of a living organism, penetrated with intellectual vitality, instinct with ideas. No draughtsman can rival the camera in bare accuracy; but every draughtsman is bound to do what the camera cannot do, by introducing a subjective quality into the reproduction.

It will be convenient to put this point in a slightly different way. When we analyse what goes to the production of a work of art, we find, upon the one hand, an act of mental intuition into the object which has to be represented, whereby the nature of that object is imaginatively

grasped. Upon the other hand, we find that certain materials and processes have been employed with more or less technical dexterity, as marble, clay, wood, metal, colour upon canvas, colour upon lime-surface, copper-plate bitten by burin and acid, and the like. These materials and processes, forming the technical part of art-production, are symbols, much in the same sense as words are symbols, for externalising a mental conception of the object. They differ, indeed, from words, inasmuch as the object to be represented is itself solid, and marble is solid; or is coloured, and the pigments on the painter's palette are coloured; or has a defined outline, with appreciable relations of light to darkness, and an etching presents this outline with similar relations of light to darkness. In fact, the symbols of the figurative arts differ from the symbols used by poetry, in this: that they are able to match or imitate certain salient qualities in the object. Yet it is clear that they are recognised as symbols, and that an exact copy of the object is not the end of figurative art. If this were the end, the most artistic portrait of a lady would be a carefully modelled wax-figure, coloured to imitate her complexion, with glass eyes of the right shade, artificial teeth, and a wig of real hair, the whole attired in a suit of her own clothes. And even then we should not have got rid of symbolism; for wax and colour are not flesh, glass eyes cannot contract their iris, nor does any wig, however

deftly made, spring from the forehead or curl about the nape like living hair. Having then admitted that all art, however apparently imitative, is symbolic, and that it symbolises a conception formed of some external object in the artist's mind, we are able to perceive that the result will be more idealistic, or more realistic, according to the bent of the man's sympathy with nature, according to his choice of materials and processes, and, lastly, according to his method of employing these technical symbols. If, like the pedlar in Wordsworth's "Peter Bell,"

A primrose by a river's brim,
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more,

then his picture of the primrose will be prosaically accurate. It will be a botanical diagram, and its artistic value will consist in the delicacy of draughtsmanship, the accuracy of colouring, whereby some particular primrose has been represented. If, on the other hand, he views things like the poet in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*,* if

He will watch from dawn till gloom
The lake-reflected sun illum
The yellow bees in the ivy bloom,
Nor heed, nor see what things they be,
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality,

* I allude to the well-known lines, beginning :
On a poet's lips I slept . . .

then his picture of the same primrose will result in a piece of pure fancy, the chalice of a yellow flower exhaling some ærial sylph, like those in William Blake's floral decorations. These are extreme instances; yet the rhythm of figurative symbolism, even in the case of a primrose, passes from botanical diagrams through William Hunt's exquisite portraits to Blake's fairies. Look at the same matter from the point of view, not of imaginative insight, but of technical process. Should the artist have a certain landscape in his mind, and should he choose etching as the medium for its representation, he renounces the larger part of those symbols which appeal immediately to the senses. Colour is abstracted; nothing remains but tone and outline, and even these have to be imaginatively employed for purposes of pure suggestion, since it is impossible in any etching to obtain the correct values of light and dark in nature. If, on the other hand, he works upon a large canvas in oils, with all the pigments furnished by the colourman, he aims at a more obviously imitative result. Yet he is still dealing with symbols. He cannot get the whole light or the whole dark of nature. He must manipulate, economise, and conventionalise the hues of the scene before him. An etching seems thus, by the qualities of the process, to be more idealistic; an oil picture, by its qualities, seems to be more realistic. In other words, the essential symbolism of figura-

tive art is forced more obviously upon our attention by the former than by the latter. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that what we mean by Realism is the technical side of art, and what we mean by Idealism is the imaginative side. A work of art, patient and flawless in its technical execution, may at the same time be highly idealistic.* Conversely, a slovenly and ignorant piece of technical workmanship may have no imaginative qualities to recommend it.† The truth to remember is that, whatever process the figurative artist uses, and however ably he employs his symbols, he cannot remain a merely faithful copyist. Even the most prosaic or wilfully imitative craftsman adds something of his own imagination to the copy he produces, and is thwarted in any attempt to avoid this necessity by the fact that he has only symbols to deal with, and his individual perceptive faculty to see by.

III.

We must not pause here in our analysis of what the draughtsman brings of ideality to his work. I have tried to show that the bare attempt by a human being to imitate what he sees before him introduces of necessity the element of mind into

* Such work was that of Gian Bellini in his *Madonna at the Frari*.

† Such work was that of Giorgio Vasari in his frescoes on the Cupola of the Duomo at Florence.

his transcript from nature. But no human being stands alone in this world. His own particular mental quality is influenced by the thought of his race and epoch. The intellectual atmosphere in which he lives determines him. He cannot help being to some extent the creature of his age, the child of antecedent ages. Thus, in addition to the specific quality introduced by an artist into his imitation of an object, there are universal mental elements, tending towards idealism, which affect the whole function of art in each race and each epoch. Should sculptor or painter try to be merely imitative, crudely realistic, he cannot succeed so well as the photographic camera does. Should he never so obstinately cling to the *art for art* principle, he cannot avoid suggesting thoughts—good, bad, or indifferent, noble or ignoble, pure or foul—through the form his thinking brain and intelligent fingers have evolved from studies of reality. Moreover, artists, their works, and the people who survey their works, are environed by a common atmosphere of ideas, which makes an art devoid of ideality impossible. In art spirit communicates with spirit, the spirit of the artist with the spirit of the spectator.

The demonstration of this deep-seated bond between Idealism and Realism is so important that I must once more approach it from a somewhat different point of view. Twenty draughts-

men, we have seen, will not imitate the same object with the same identity of result as twenty photographic cameras. The draughtsman cannot be so literally realistic as the machine ; he is bound to modify his reproduction of the object by some note indicative of his own mental and moral nature. He will not rival the machine in accuracy ; but he cannot avoid adding something which the machine is powerless to give. It is precisely by emphasizing this quality which differentiates the draughtsman from the machine, that the arts arrive at Idealism. Art supplements its mechanical deficiencies, and exerts the specific faculties of human beings by seeking after beauty and by aiming at the expression of thought. It deliberately cultivates the subjective element which is inevitably present in every reproduction of an object by the human brain and hand. In acting thus, it utilises what might be described as man's inferiority to a machine in graphic accuracy, while it exercises man's superiority to the machine in power of intellectual suggestion. To turn defects into forces by the exertion of mind is the privilege which man possesses, rendering him the lord over brutes and the controller of mechanical instruments. So Idealism in art is the ultimate elaboration of that comparative inaccuracy and that imported subjective quality, both of which distinguish the most literal drawing from a photograph.

Artistic beauty is mainly a matter of selection, due to the exercise of those free mental faculties which the machine lacks. The sculptor or the painter observes defects in the single model ; he notices in many models scattered excellences ; he has before him the most perfect forms invented by his predecessors. To correct those defects, to reunite those excellences, to apply the principles of those perfected types, becomes his aim. He cannot rival Nature by producing anything exactly like her work, but he can create something which shall show what Nature strives after. *Βούλεται μὲν ἀλλ' οὐ δύναται*, wrote Aristotle about Nature ; "she has the will but not the power to realise perfection." The mind of man comprehends her effort, and though the skill of man cannot compete with her in the production of particulars, he is able by art to anticipate her desires, and to exhibit an image of what she was intending. As Tennyson wrote in "The Two Voices :"

That type of perfect in his mind
Can he in Nature nowhere find.

This, at least, is how the matter *appears* to man ; although it can hardly be doubted that Nature in her entirety is more perfect than our imagination, could man but attain to full and sympathetic comprehension of the universal scheme. Perhaps it may be a defect in our perceptive faculty which makes

us discern and seek to remedy defect in nature. Perhaps the truth may be that man's intelligence, being at present the highest known thing in the universe, apprehends the relative inferiority of things below it in the scale of being. Anyhow, the fact remains that we can observe and correct ideally many blemishes in natural objects—as, for example, a thick ankle or a disproportioned leg, the squint in the eyes of an otherwise symmetrical face, a hare-lip, an unwieldy branch in some fine oak, an ungraceful combination of lines in a mountain landscape. It is clearly not the artist's duty to copy these apparent defects in the object because they occur in nature, when his faculty of generalisation enables him to rectify them by the analogy of other objects in nature which are to us more pleasing, and which more completely realise "that type of perfect" existing in our intelligence. It is the same with ugliness as with what we call sin, evil, pain, disease. All of these qualities seem to us imperfections, and we are justified in attempting to remove ugliness from the æsthetic sphere, sin from the moral, pain and disease from the physical. Yet those who believe that the universe, as at present constituted, is in some inexplicable way a manifestation of immanent divinity, must incline to the belief that all evil, including ugliness, is only in appearance, and, as the Greeks said, "to us."

All nature is but art unknown to thee ;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see ;
All discord, harmony not understood ;
All partial evil, universal good.

Such optimism, indeed, is not so unscientific as it looks. Science in its most philosophical form introduces a spirituality into our conceptions of the world, whereby we are being brought back on surer paths to the Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius or to the Theism of Bolingbroke and Pope. The fact, however, remains that, with our present partial knowledge of the universe, ugliness, sin, pain, disease, all of which are incontestably present in nature, contradict what we believe to be the best part of ourselves, our mental imagination of perfection.

"To disengage the elements of beauty," says Sainte-Beuve ; "To escape from the mere frightful reality," says Joubert. That is the function of the arts. Reality, however, is never, in a true sense, frightful. Reality is always the sole sound schoolmaster which brings us to a sense of ideal beauty. Sculptor and painter are indeed bound to pass beyond the model. They cannot, as I go on reiterating, even if they would, abide by it as the camera or the plaster cast does. The mere touch of the brush or the chisel, of "the hand which obeys the intellect," prevents that. What they can do, and what a mechanical process cannot do, is to *interpret* it ; not to contradict it ; nay,

rather to obey its leading; but to supplement its shortcomings, to elucidate its latent suggestions of significance and loveliness. They do not aim at producing a mere bare copy of their subject at some accidental moment, for they know that the thing itself is better than such a copy would be. They attempt to seize and reveal its character at the very best, to represent what it strives to be, to express its truest truth, not what is transitory and conditioned by circumstance, but what is permanent and freed from limitations in it.

The figurative arts are thus led to what is after all their highest function, the presentation of thought and feeling in beautiful form. Statues and pictures must fall short of life in flesh and blood reality. But these same works of human industry can transfigure particular realities by infusing into them the elements of generalisation, selection, interpretative insight. These elements, in the language of discredited schools, are expression and idealisation. According to the demonstration I have attempted in this essay, they may be better described as the final outcome of those qualities—partly defect of mechanical accuracy, partly addition of mental sensibility—which distinguish a drawing from a cast or photograph. They are the deliberate elaboration of the subjective ingredient which is found in every imitation by the hand of man.

IV.

Figurative art, in its most vital epochs, lent itself to the expression of religious ideas. The artist had to find corporeal investiture for the generalised and divinised qualities of human nature. Such exact corporeal investiture for a spiritual type of human energy or passion is rarely, if ever, offered by a single living person. Who, for example, has seen a man or woman of whom he could say, "There goes Zeus," or "There goes Aphrodite"? What we do say is rather, "Majestic as Zeus, beautiful as Aphrodite." In other words, the living person suggests hints to the artist for working out "that type of perfect in his mind." The artist, then, is compelled to create a body for the idea he has to express; more majestic or more beautiful than any single body he has ever seen; more completely adequate to the idea; more thoroughly penetrated with the specific qualities of the spiritual type, in all its parts. At the same time this form must not, at any point, be discordant with the structure of the human body as he learns to know it from his models. It must, on the contrary, be most faithful to those models, enhancing and accentuating their suggestions, interpreting with loyal conscientiousness nature's effort to effectuate perfection. Here at last we touch Idealism in its essence. But such Idealism, when sound and

healthy, is only Realism in the intensest phase of veracity; it is truth quintessenced and raised to the highest power. Such art is the ultimate expansion of those factors which we found to be coexistent in the simplest sketch from nature.

In the right understanding of this correlation between Realism and Idealism the Greek sculptors are our surest teachers. It was incumbent upon them to create images of gods and goddesses and heroes, each of whom represented in perfection some one psychological attribute of human nature. For these spiritual essences they were bound to find fit incarnation through the means available by art. They therefore always had before their minds the problem how to invest such isolated attributes with appropriate forms—how to fashion a Zeus who should be all-majestic, a Herakles who should be strength personified, an Aphrodite who should be the consummation of feminine attractiveness, a Faun who should be light and active as the creatures of the woodland without ceasing to be man in shape. The solution of this problem forced them to idealise, while their exquisite sense for the beauty, grace, and dignity of the living model kept them realistically faithful to minutest facts in nature.

In order to illustrate how the best Greek work exhibits that right blending of the ideal with the real, on which I am insisting, I will quote a

passage from Haydon's autobiography, which records the impression made upon his mind by the first sight of the Elgin marbles. It must be remembered that Haydon grew up in England at a time when Reynolds, Fuseli, and West had saturated the art schools with false doctrine about "the beau-ideal," "the grand style," "the superiority of art to nature." Haydon, though he never worked out the problems of design successfully in his own practice, was convinced that Realism, or truth to actual fact, formed the only solid basis for sculpture and painting. Consequently, when he found the closest observation of nature combined with the loftiest heroic style in the fragments of the Parthenon, these had for him authentic inspiration; they delivered him from what was specious and misleading in the Idealism of his epoch; they confirmed him in his own instinctive belief that genuine grandeur was not only compatible with the most painstaking imitation of the model, but that such devotion to the truth of nature formed an indispensable condition of masterly creative work. Here was an apocalypse of the right method for all art and in all ages. Here was a demonstration of the indissoluble and organic link between the sublimest Idealism and the humblest Realism.

There is so much of a curious sort of pathos, combined with so much of passionate and sudden

enthusiasm, in Haydon's narrative, that I venture to reproduce a large portion of it textually. It should not be forgotten that to this man, in no small measure, English people owe the presence in their midst of these Parthenon sculptures, and all that flows therefrom for better or for worse :

"To Park Lane then we went, and after passing through the hall and thence into an open yard, entered a damp, dirty pen-house, where lay the marbles ranged within sight and reach.

"The first thing I fixed my eyes on was the wrist of a figure in one of the female groups, in which were visible, though in a feminine form, the radius and ulna. I was astonished, for I had never seen them hinted at in any female wrist in the antique. I darted my eye to the elbow, and saw the outer condyle visibly affecting the shape as in nature. I saw that the arm was in repose and the soft parts in relaxation. That combination of nature and idea which I had felt was so much wanting for high art was here displayed to midday conviction. My heart beat! If I had seen nothing else, I had beheld enough to keep me to nature for the rest of my life. But when I turned to the Theseus and saw that every form was altered by action or repose—when I saw that the two sides of his back varied, one side stretched from the shoulder-blade being pulled forward, and the other side compressed from the shoulder-blade being pushed close to the spine as he rested on his elbow, with the belly flat, because the bowels fell into the pelvis as he sat—and when, turning to the Ilissus, I saw the belly protruded from the figure lying on its side—and again when in the figure of the fighting Metope I saw the muscle shown under the arm-pit in that instantaneous action of darting out, and left out in the other arm-pits because not wanted—when I saw, in fact, the most heroic style combined with all the essential detail of actual life, the thing was done at once and

for ever. . . . I felt as if a divine truth had blazed inwardly upon my mind, and I knew that they (the marbles) would at last rouse the art of Europe from its slumber in the darkness."

V.

At this point it is necessary, for the sake of clearness, to attempt the definition of Realism and Idealism. We have already learned that every work of figurative art contains both elements, whether this be a simple pencil-drawing from a single model, or a composition so complex as the friezes of the Parthenon. Yet it is obvious that the artist may lean more to one side than the other. He may choose to concentrate his powers upon the literal imitation of objects rather than upon the development of subjective qualities. Or, on the other hand, he may devote his whole attention to the refinement of an intellectual type of beauty or to the expression of thoughts, remaining content with slovenly execution and feeble grasp on fact. At one period of art, and in one school, tendencies in favour of crude Realism will prevail ; at another time, or in another region, the bias will be toward unsubstantial Idealism. We cannot always expect that perfect synthesis which makes the work of Pheidias exemplary. It is therefore profitable to define the two factors which are for ever being brought by the practice of art into more or less complete accord.

Realism is the presentation of natural objects as the artist sees them, as he thinks they are. It is the attempt to imitate things as they strike the senses.

Idealism is the presentation of natural objects as the artist fain would see them, as he thinks they strive to be. It is the attempt to imitate things as the mind interprets them.

I may pause to remark that the distinction implied in these definitions is as old as Aristotle. In the *Poetics* we read: "Sophocles used to say that he depicted men as they ought to be, Euripides as they are." In other words, Sophocles regarded himself as an idealist, Euripides as a realist. Again: "Polygnotus painted men better than they are, Pauson worse than they are, Dionysius as they are." In other words, Polygnotus was an idealist, Pauson a caricaturist, Dionysius a realist. Once again, speaking more generally of painters, Aristotle gives a clear account of idealists: "While making men like men they paint them fairer."*

Now this distinction, which is based upon the fundamental properties of human as distinguished from mechanical imitation, has been fruitful of results both in the practice and the theory of the art. Draughtsmen very soon discover that they cannot wholly eliminate an idealistic or subjective element from their work; but they are able either

* These passages will be found in cap. xxvi. and cap. ii.

to keep this in abeyance or to emphasize it. They can swerve more to the side of literal delineation, or more to the side of imaginative selection. Theorists and writers upon art, noticing this power of choice, have divided into hostile camps ; and the doctrines of the schools have reacted upon practice. Notwithstanding the impossibility of separating the twin-born factors of every human imitative product, antagonistic standards of the Real and the Ideal came thus into existence. The warfare of opinion on this crucial point diverts practical artists from consistently aiming at that just balance between the careful study of nature and the effort to interpret nature, which is the mark of supreme art.

I will illustrate my meaning by referring to European art in the last three centuries. When sculpture and painting declined in Italy, after the death of Michel Angelo, artists began to withdraw from the study of life. Theories were promulgated to the effect that nature hampers the freedom of genius, and obscures the inspiration which illuminates the artist's soul. It was maintained that he ought only to know so much of nature as would save his work from monstrosity. He was told that art bettered nature, and that the painstaking imitation of details lowered style. This led to superficial, slovenly, conceited compositions being palmed off as sublime. The frigid abstractions of

the Bolognese Eclectics passed for heroic, because they avoided literal painstaking transcripts from reality. The doctrine of the *beau idéal* was preached in France. Sir Joshua Reynolds dilated on the Grand Style. David, with his pseudo-classicism, imposed on Paris as the reviver of the Greek manner. West in England, vacuous and feeble, took rank among the great religious painters. A spurious Idealism reigned supreme; and through the starvation of her twin-sister Realism, art fell into decay.

A reaction was necessitated. The world had been filled with manneristic technicalities and with shallow academical pomposities—with ideal figures, ideal faces, ideal draperies, ideal landscapes, ideal trees, which were only ideal because they resembled nothing real precisely. The reaction assumed many forms; it showed itself earliest in a revived admiration for Dutch painting and in the English school of landscape; it took definite shape in the Romanticists of France and Germany and in the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood of England. But that which principally concerns us here is its final manifestation in what is now called Realism. This, of a truth, is rather a phase of literature than of figurative art; yet it may be studied in contemporary sculpture and painting no less than in poetry and fiction.

Realism, being a revolt against the false principles of that phthisical Idealism which

claimed the empire in despite of Nature, has attached itself to the ugly, the commonplace, the vicious in human existence; it has set its face steadily against selection and interpretation; it has striven to represent things merely as they are, and not the best things.

In so doing the Realists have chosen an illogical and untenable position; for nothing is more manifest than that beauty is as real as ugliness, purity as obscenity, virtue as vice, health and harmony as disease and discord. Indeed, as I have remarked above, the whole history of the world proves that the good possesses more of reality, more of permanence, than the bad. Reactions and revolutions, however, are never just. And thus it is with contemporary Realism. Conscious that Idealism, in the effete forms of the last century, was a sham—conscious that this impostor claimed the monopoly of beauty, purity, virtue, harmony—the reactionaries studied reality where it is most painfully apparent and least capable of being confounded with the idealistic object of their hatred. They chose the sphere of vulgarity and pathology as though this were eminently real. Philosophers, meanwhile, can welcome even Zola's *Nana* for the sake of its reactionary force. We know that the pendulum must swing back from that extreme point. The arts are bound to recognise the truth that it is not their duty and their glory to repre-

sent deformity. But the arts will have been the better for those drastic studies which force them to face their problem in its crudest shape.

Resuming what I have attempted to establish, we find in the art-history of the present century a false Idealism superseded by a false Realism. Both are false, because neither recognises the correlation of these elements, which, in the work of Pheidias, we have seen to be supremely harmonised. The idealist sought to dispense with the necessary interrogation of nature; the realist seeks to ignore the fact that art must aim at selection and must disengage the elements of beauty inherent in nature. The one regarded man's incapacity to rival a machine with pride, and deemed his power of independent imagination sufficient for itself. The other, indignant at the miserable consequences of such arrogance, strives to reduce man's mind, so far as possible, to the condition of an imitative machine.*

Meanwhile, this uncompromising Realism is by no means the most hopeful or the most prominent feature in the art of our age. On various lines, in many divers ways, since the reaction against false Idealism set in, have attempts been made to solve the problem of combining the twin factors in a due and vital correlation. Together with

* Many writers of fiction appear, in their dialogue, to be vainly competing with the phonograph.

improved conditions of study in our art-schools, the attention paid to the monuments of Sculpture and Painting in their best periods (Hellenic, mediæval, early Italian, Flemish, French), has been progressively helpful; while no one can exaggerate the importance of such moral teaching as Mr. Ruskin gives so copiously to the student. ~~~

The task of forming a noble style is one of peculiar difficulty under the conditions of our epoch, because the arts have no longer a sphere of thoughts to work in, which stimulates the exercise of the highest imaginative faculties. We saw how Greek sculptors were compelled to idealise by their obligation to incarnate the Olympian divinities, and how at the same time their exquisite feeling for nature kept them within the limits of sober realistic truth. Like them, the earlier Italian painters dealt with the mythology of an anthropomorphic religion; their task was only a trifle less favourable to the right elucidation of the ideal from the real than was that of Pheidias. But we live at a period when theistic conceptions or, in other words, the most deeply-penetrating and universally-accepted thoughts of the race, no longer lend themselves to æsthetic presentation. They have grown too rarefied, too abstract, too purely intellectual, for adequate treatment by the figurative artist. In the place of Hellenic myth and Christian legend, the vast scientific theory of the Cosmos has arisen,

itself pregnant with a new metaphysic and a new theology, but as yet imperfectly appropriated and ill-adapted to the plastic presentation of its fundamental ideas. Science, moreover, has made one fact manifest, that the more we come to know instead of dreaming about things, the less can we tolerate to have those things misrepresented in accordance with some whimsical or obsolescent fancy. Science has rendered our sense of veracity acute. Under its influence we tend to become positive, shy of anything which seems untrue to fact, intolerant of a merely allgorical use of known things to express visions however beautiful, or aspirations however honourable. We require the *vraie vérité* so far as we can get it. Art, obliged to obey the mental stress of the epoch, deprived of a widely-accepted body of sensuous religious thoughts, leans of necessity more to Realism than it did in the Athens of Pericles or in the Florence of Lorenzo de' Medici.

On a future occasion I hope to return to this subject, and to point out those elements of ideality in modern life and thought, which lie ready to the uses of the arts, and on which the arts have already seized with profit.

THE MODEL.

I.

I ATTEMPTED in the preceding essay to show that figurative art implies a certain relation between realism and idealism, which varies according to the volition of the artist. In other words, the artist cannot avoid modifying his imitation of the chosen object by the infusion of his own subjective quality; but he is at liberty to reduce this subjective element to a minimum, or, on the other hand, to regard it as his chief concern.

Human art is unable to reproduce nature, except upon such terms as these. It cannot draw as accurately as the sun does by means of the photographic camera. It cannot render dialogue with the fidelity of a phonograph. At the same time it is obliged to import something which external nature does not possess, something which belongs exclusively to the spirit of man, into all its transcripts from the world around us.

To say that art is superior to nature would be

an impertinence. Yet art has a sphere separate from and beyond nature, which belongs to ideas, to emotions, to sentiments, to the region of the human spirit. This sphere is not alien to nature : indeed it is the highest thing known to us in the universe ; being, as it is, the specific property of man, who is himself a part of nature.

II.

Those who have attentively studied a fine nude model, observing the gradations of colour, the play of light and shade and shadow upon the surface of the flesh, attending to the intricate details of muscular and bony structure thus revealed, marking the thrill of life in pulse and respiration and slight alterations of attitude, such students will perforce concede that no drawing, whether it be by the hand of Lionardo da Vinci or of Ingres, can bear comparison with the living miracle displayed before them. In so far as the drawing conscientiously portrays the model, it calls forth admiration by its exhibition of the draughtsman's skill ; it instructs a learner by the revelation of his method. Yet it remains a poor and feeble shadow of the truth. Art, we say, is immeasurably below fact, so long as it attempts to rival the glow and richness of the living man by its mere shadow-scheme of imitation.

In a second degree such drawings are inferior

to really careful photographs from the nude. I have before me a reproduction of the celebrated study of two naked men, which Raphael sent as a specimen of his skill to Albert Dürer, and also a photograph from a model in almost exactly the same position as one of Raphael's figures.* The model in my photograph is somewhat coarse and vulgar. Yet no one, on comparing these two forms (the crayon study and the photograph), can fail, I think, to acknowledge the superiority of the more literal transcript from nature. Cunning as was Raphael's craft, there is slovenly drawing in the hands and feet, exaggerated markings in the knee-joints, unmeaning salience of muscle on the back, and a too violent curve in the outline of the belly. The sun drew better than Raphael; and the photograph of this common model is more delightful to look at, because more adequate to the infinite subtlety of nature, than the masterpiece of the great draughtsman of Urbino. Every detail of the body here is right, and in right relation to the whole; every sinew explains itself without effort and without emphasis; and the ripple of light and

* Raphael's drawing (in the Albertina collection, at Vienna, I believe) is inscribed by Dürer: "1515. Raffahill di Urbin der so hoch beim Pabst geacht ist gewest hat die hat diese nacken bild gemacht und hat sy dem Albrecht Dürer gen Nurnberg geschiecht um sein Hand zu weisen." The photograph of the model is one issued in Vienna for the use of art-students.

shade over the whole flesh surface exhibits vital energy in a way which no work of art has ever done.

It will, however, be objected that to contrast a chalk drawing with a photograph from nature is not fair. The former must always, to some extent, resemble a diagram, while the latter represents at least the fulness and completeness of life. I therefore pass on to a third degree of comparison; and for this purpose I will select companion reproductions by photography of Flandrin's famous study in the Luxembourg and of a living model in the same attitude.* (Flandrin's picture, it will be remembered, represents a young man seated naked on a rock above the sea, with a craggy line of coast in the far distance. His legs are gathered up to the belly, and clasped with both hands above the ankles; his head is bent upon the knees, so that nothing of the facial expression is visible.) Any unfairness in this comparison will certainly be to the injury of the model; for Flandrin's picture has all the advantage of the most consummate brush-work, and of the most careful attention to light and shade upon flesh surfaces. It is in fact an elaborate oil-painting of high technical excellence

* The Autotype Company sells an admirable carbon photograph of Flandrin's picture. The photograph of the model is from the series issued for art-students at Vienna, mentioned in a note above.

and elevated style. My photograph from the model is a comparatively poor one ; the subject has not been selected with care, and the print is flat. Yet I learn from it innumerable niceties which Flandrin has not worked out—something about the spring and strain of tendons in the wrist and forearm where the hand is clasped ; something about the wrinkles in the belly caused by the forward bending of the back ; something about the prolongation of the muscles of the pleura due to the stretching of the arm in that position. The model, moreover, is more interesting, more rich in suggestions of vital energy and movement. From the point of view of uncompromising realism, there can be no doubt which is the more satisfactory performance. The photograph of the model is second, the photograph of the picture is third, in its remove from nature, from reality, from truth. If the aim of art be to render a literal image of the object, then the art of the camera in this competition bears away the palm.

Nevertheless there is equally no doubt that Flandrin's study is a painted poem, while the photograph of the nude model is only what one may see any morning if one gets a well-made youth to strip and pose.

What then gives Flandrin's picture its value as an artistic product, as a painted poem ? It tells no story, has no obvious intention ; the painter

clearly meant it to be as perfect a transcript from the nude, as near to the *vraie vérité* of nature, as he could make it. The answer is that, although he may not have sought to idealise, although he did not seek to express a definite thought, his picture is penetrated with spiritual quality. In passing through the artist's mind, this form of a mere model has been transfigured. While it has lost something of the vivacity and salient truth of nature, it has acquired permanence, dignity, repose, elevation. It has become "a thing of beauty, a joy for ever," in a sense in which no living person, however far more attractive, more interesting, more multiformly charming, can be described by these terms.

III.

Art will never match the infinite variety and subtlety of nature; no drawing or painting will equal the primary beauties of the living model. We cannot paint a tree as lovely as the tree upon the field in sunlight is. We cannot carve a naked man as wonderful as the youth stripped there upon the river's bank before his plunge into the water. Therefore the thorough-going Realist ought frankly to abandon figurative art, and to content his soul with the exhibition and contemplation of actual nature. This, however, is not the conclusion to which our argument leads; for after we have

admitted the relative inferiority of art to nature, we know that art has qualities, all of them derived from the intellectual, selective, imaginative faculties of man, which more than justify its existence.

The brain, by interposing its activity in however slight a degree between the object and the representation, is bound to interpret, and in so far to idealise. The primary reality of the model, the secondary reality of the photographic portrait, are exchanged for reality as the artist's mind and heart have conceived it. Thus what a man sees and feels in the world around him, what he selects from it, and how he presents it, constitute the *differentia* of art. He may falsify or faithfully report, elevate or degrade, eliminate the purest form from nature, or produce a grotesque satire of her most beautiful creations. This intervention of the artist's mind between the object and the figured representation makes him an interpreter; it invests all works of art with some mood, some tone, some suggestion of human thought and emotion. And whether this intervention be voluntary or involuntary matters little. The point to fix on is that the artist's mind cannot be inoperative in the processes of art. The imported element of subjectivity will be definite or vague, according to the intensity of the artist's character, and according to the amount of purpose or conviction which he felt while working; it will be genial or repellent,

tender or austere, humane or barbarous, depraving or ennobling, chaste or licentious, sensual or spiritual, according to the bias of his temperament.

Now it is just this intervention of a thinking, feeling subjectivity which makes Flandrin's study of the young man alone upon the rock a painted poem. We may not, while looking at this picture, be quite sure what the meaning of the poem is: different minds, as in the case of musical melody, will be affected by it in divers ways. To me, for instance, the picture suggests resignation, the mystery of fate, the calm of acquiescence. The ocean which surrounds that solitary form, and the distant coast-line, add undoubtedly to an imaginative impression of the sort I have described. These accessories are absent in the photograph of the model, which only suggests the interior of a studio. In so far, therefore, as they contribute to the total effect of Flandrin's picture, the mere model is at a palpable disadvantage. Yet we might transfer the model to a real rock, with the same scene of sea and coast painted behind him for a background; or better, we might place him in position on some spur of Capri's promontories with the Sorrentine headland for background; but in neither case should we obtain the result achieved by Flandrin. A photograph from the model in these circumstances would not influence our mind in the same manner. The beauty of the study might be even greater;

the truth to fact, to nature's infinite variety of structure in the living body, would be undoubtedly more striking; the emotion stirred in us might be more pungent, and our interest more vivid; yet something, that indeed which makes the poem, would have disappeared. Instead of being toned to the artist's mood by sympathy with the ideas—vague but deep as melody—which the intervention of his mind imports into the subject, we should dwell upon the vigour of adolescent manhood, we should be curious perhaps to see the youth spring up, we should wonder how his lifted eyes might gaze on us, and what his silent lips might utter.

IV.

Through the art of the sculptor and the painter the human form acquires a language, inexhaustible in symbolism, every limb, every feature, every attitude, being a word full of significance to those who comprehend. Through him a well-shaped hand, or throat, or head, a neck superbly poised on an athletic chest, the sway of the trunk above the hips, the starting of the muscles on the flank, the tendons of the ankle strained for speed, the outline of the shoulder when the arm is raised, the backward bending of the loins, the contours of a body careless in repose or girt for action, are all pregnant with spiritual meaning. It is not necessary that

the artist should seek to express ideas while studying and reproducing them. It is enough that he has felt them, thought them out, passed them through the alembic of his mind. Paint or carve the body of a man, and, as you do this nobly, you will give the measure of both highest thought and most impassioned deed; as you do this ignobly, you will suggest evil lusts, animal grossness, or contemptible deformities. The artist, owing to the conditions under which he works, cannot fail to be an interpreter; unable to reproduce the object as it is, he must reproduce what his own self brings to it.

Style is thus an all-important factor in what I have called interpretation, and upon which the ideal element of art depends. Style has been defined as equivalent to the specific qualities of the individual—*Le style c'est l'homme*. Style has also been described as a recasting or remoulding of the stuff of thought. In the figurative arts, style passes form through the crucible of a mind which perceives its qualities in some specific way; style infuses the man, the spiritual nature of the artist, into his reproduction of the object. Style is what a sentient being, when he tries to imitate, cannot help adding to the thing he renders; it is what obliges the artistic transcript to affect our minds quite otherwise than the thing in nature does.

These considerations might be pursued into the subtlest and remotest regions. Art being essentially

“form-giving,” and the form being determined by the artist’s specific power of selection, and preference for some one aspect or another of the material supplied by nature, it follows that no two men can treat the same subject in the same way. Each individual, to put this point somewhat differently, has his own style; and the exercise of style renders his work not only a copy of the thing perceived, but also an expression of character in the perceiving person. To eliminate the mental element from art, the element of style, the element of interpretation, is therefore utterly impossible. What we call the successive manners of the same master are mainly the result of changes in his way of thinking and feeling, which have necessitated corresponding changes in his interpretation of nature. Compare Raphael’s treatment of the female nude in his small panel of the Three Graces (once in Lord Dudley’s, now in the Duc d’Aumale’s possession) with his treatment of the female nude in the Farnesina frescoes, and you will perceive how the man’s emotional and intellectual attitude had altered between the period of his first and that of his third manner.

V.

From these reflections upon the points of difference between a model and a picture from the model, we may return to the old problem of

idealism and realism, in order to grasp their correlation in plastic works of art more firmly.

How striking is the contrast between any photograph from the nude, male or female, and a mezzotint by Bartolozzi! The photograph presents realism in its crudest, most uncompromising aspect; sex and the individual are rendered with brutal fidelity. The mezzotint presents idealism in its flimsiest and most conventional aspect: it is difficult to say whether those decorative figures are meant for men or women; the individual disappears in an agreeable generalisation. Without wishing to create hermaphrodites, the draughtsman produced sexless beings. He sacrificed character, specific type, salience of structure, to the incarnation of a sentiment. Art, when it reached this point, had passed into a kind of senile symbolism, the symbolism of insincerity and second childhood, aiming at nothing but how to clothe a faint and saccharine emotion with graceful form.

The revolt against this disloyalty to truth justified the action of modern realistic and naturalistic schools. It was felt, and rightly felt, that almost any crudity is less offensive than such emasculate distortion of the human form for ornamental purposes. It was felt, and rightly felt, that the idealism of Bartolozzi is the suicide of art.

Yet the question remains whether uncom-

promising realism is not in its turn also the suicide of art. Driven by contempt for feeble idealism into blunt copying of what they see before them, realistic draughtsmen find themselves at once outrivalled by the model or the photograph.

Art, after passing through the reactionary stage of realism, must become once more symbolic on a higher level. In its inability to reproduce Tom, Jack, and Harry, powerful and animated types of individual life, it will be forced to do as Michel Angelo and William Blake did, with deeper and more modest reverence for fact than they possessed, Michel Angelo cared much for the human body; Blake cared little for it. Both violated the truth and excellence of nature—the one by studied mathematical hypertrophy of form—the other by visionary disregard of structure. But both succeeded in making the body symbolic of emotion and of thought.

We might parody the famous saying of Pascal, and declare that the consummate artist must be a *réaliste accompli* and an *idéaliste soumis*. In other words, he must use the truest truth of nature, the most scientific grasp on actual form, in the service of imaginative symbolism. He must at one and the same time both obey and control the model, departing at no point from its teaching, but utilising its character and individuality for the further purpose of expression.

BEAUTY, COMPOSITION, EXPRESSION, CHARACTERISATION.

I.

IN the two previous essays I drew attention to what may be called the spontaneous or involuntary elements of ideality existing in all products of the figurative arts. These elements, culminating in style, denote the necessary intervention of human intelligence and feeling in every imitative effort. It is due to them that imitations made by the artist's brain and hand differ in essential respects from imitations made by a machine, and also that no two persons can produce exactly similar transcripts from the same object.

The question, however, may be asked whether imitation is the real aim pursued by art. It obviously constitutes the most prominent condition under which the plastic arts fulfil their function. To imitate something can be termed the radical, initial impulse which leads in course of time to independent artistic activity. Figures of men and

reindeer scratched on bone implements of the Stone epoch indicate this primal impulse in its earliest stage. Yet even here we may doubt whether the mimetic effort was not subordinate to some free imaginative exercise of mind. Children teach us on this point. It is clear that when they rudely sketch a man or dog, they are thinking of something of which the scrawled man or dog is but a symbol. Their delight in the symbol is quite out of proportion to its value as a representation of the object. The imitative act and the symbolic shape which results therefrom, are therefore the index of another and ulterior working of their mind.

We may dismiss the mimetic essays of primitive men and children without further notice. What we are at present concerned with is so different in degree of skill as almost to be different in kind, namely art-work produced by the highest faculties of civilised adult humanity. Now, when we reflect upon the totality of such things presented to our observation, we are led to the conclusion that none of the arts has, hitherto at least, been satisfied with simple imitation. This is clear enough in the case of architecture and music. Poetry can only be called an imitative instead of an expressive or presentative art, in the same way as speech in general might, by a kind of quibble, be called imitative. Even the plastic arts, although they are bound to copy visible objects, do not do

so for the sake of imitation. Their object is to give delight to the mind through the sense of vision. With this purpose in view, they exercise qualities in the artist, which are distinct from his mimetic skill. Speaking broadly, we find that beauty, composition, expression, and characterisation are governing conditions, to which the imitative process has been subordinated, and without which we do not dignify the copy of an object with the name of art-work.

I think it can be shown that in fulfilling these conditions the artist voluntarily insists upon those subjective elements which distinguish a drawing from the living model, or a picture from the photograph of the model. It is therefore of importance to consider the four factors I have mentioned—beauty, composition, expression, and characterisation—with some attention. By doing so we shall understand how the subjectivity, the intervenient intelligence and feeling noticeable in the rudest acts of imitation by man, have been elaborated into fine art.

II.

In a certain sense art can never rival nature in beauty. Man has not the means at his command to do so—not the material for sculpture which shall reproduce flesh surface—not the pigments for painting, which shall render light and darkness, atmosphere and colour, as they truly are. Moreover,

man is a part of the universe ; his conceptions of beauty are derived from nature. He is unable to transcend the order which he helps to constitute. Yet while affirming this, we are bound to acknowledge that man's mind is the most perfect of existences at present known to us. Being the most perfect, whatsoever is presented to its observation in the external world lacks something in comparison with itself. This something it is the proper business of the mind to supply, and the power of supplying it is the justification of the figurative arts.

There is a beauty which is never found in nature, but which requires a working of human thought to elicit it from nature ; a beauty not of parts and single persons, but of complex totalities ; a beauty not of flesh and blood, but of mind, imagination, feeling. It is this beauty, where the very best things that can be seen in nature have been educed, and, as it were, quintessenced by human thought, expressed in form by human skill, and gifted with immortal life by human genius—it is this synthetic, intellectual, spirit-penetrated beauty to which the arts aspire.

In sculpture Pheidias gives us the frieze of the Parthenon ; in painting Tintoretto gives us the Bacchus and Ariadne of the Ducal Palace. Of the youths who rode and the maidens who walked in a Panathenaic procession, each may have exhibited

the vigour and the charm of actual life more perfectly than their representatives on those bas-reliefs. But no procession could have made such music to the understanding as the sculpture does. Never could the component individuals have been singly so right, and so right in their relation to the total rhythm. In compensation for that which art must miss when matched with life, something has been added—permanent, enduring, tranquil, inexhaustible in harmonies. When we turn to Tintoretto's picture, it is manifest that nature commonly produces more beautiful hands and feet than those which satisfied the painter. Countless women surpass his Aphrodite and his Ariadne in charm; nor is the Bacchus an exceptionally handsome youth. We could easily find out more lovely islands and a dreamier expanse of azure sea. Yet the world of fact has not revealed to mortal sense such beauty as this picture does; for form, landscape, colour, the play of light and shadow, have here been brought into concordance with a leading tone of intellectual emotion, a perception of divine melody existing in the painter's brain. This dominant subjective sense of beauty does not violate the truth of nature; but it is not to be satisfied at any single moment by external nature; and it is the prerogative of the human spirit to evoke such dreamland as shall correspond to its deep longing.

We must advance a step farther, and admit that

the mind, reflecting upon nature, and generalising the various suggestions of beauty which it has received from nature, becomes aware of an infinity which it can only grasp through thought and feeling, which shall never be fully revealed upon this earth, but which poetry and art bring nearer to our sensuous perceptions. Shelley, personifying this ideal vision, and addressing it as a goddess in his "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," exclaims :

Man were immortal and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.

Wordsworth, in calmer and more humble language, hits the mark when speaking of "the gleam, the light that never was on sea or land." Plato thought of this when he explained how the mind ascends from the contemplation of beautiful objects to the vision of beauty in its essence ; and when he suggested, under the form of an allegory, that the soul of man carries with it some remembrance of the archetypal loveliness beheld in previous stages of existence. It is the function of all true art to shed this gleam, this light, upon the things which have been conscientiously and lovingly observed in nature. It is the function of art to give the world a glimpse and foretaste of that universal beauty by selecting from natural objects their choicest qualities, and combining these in a

harmony beyond the sphere of actual material things.

Of this divine and transcendental loveliness Marlowe prophesied in the sublime incoherence of a well-known passage of his *Tamburlaine*. "What is beauty, then?" the hero asks:

If all the pens that ever poets held,
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,
And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
Their minds, and muses on admired themes—
If all the heavenly quintessence they still
From their immortal flowers of poesy,
Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive
The highest reaches of a human wit—
If these had made one poem's period,
And all combined in beauty's worthiness,
Yet should there hover in their restless heads
One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,
Which into words no virtue can digest.

There is no denying the reality *for us* of this ideal. That elusive loveliness which "hovers in the restless heads" of poets, may not be something tangible, demonstrable, in nature. But it remains a substantial fact for the subjective sentient being. The thirst to seize and capture it, which lures the artist on, "for ever following and for ever foiled," is no mere morbid or capricious longing. Given at the same time exactitude of observation, and fidelity to nature, this element, in so far as it has been communicated to his work, constitutes its highest value.

III.

Beauty is so essential a condition of the arts that when we come to treat of composition or design, this has to be considered as a constituent of intellectual beauty. Here, however, we are dealing with something more scientific, something more strictly calculated, something less determined by emotion. Composition implies balance, proportion, symmetry, the subordination of each part to the whole. In figurative art it is a synthesis of lines and masses resulting in a total unity ; but inasmuch as these arts represent nature which is living, the more such synthesis approaches the symmetry of living organism, not that of a geometrical diagram, the better it will be. In sculpture the statue must present harmonious development of structure from every point of view. It must be so composed that its organic unity shall offer a variety of rhythmically ordered outlines, suggesting in one stationary attitude the inexhaustible capacities for action of the living model. This, it may be observed, is one chief reason why heavily draped figures are only adapted to niches. The Sophocles of the Lateran, the Phocion and the Demosthenes of the Vatican, are so ingeniously clothed that none of the resources of the living body remain unindicated. But modern sculptors too often neglect this obvious necessity for composition in their work. They

erect in the open air monumental statues—like that, for instance, of Lionardo da Vinci upon the Piazza della Scala at Milan—which offer an effective front view to the spectator, while the back presents merely a monotonous expanse of drapery. Recumbent figures upon tombs—Gaston de Foix in the Brera, the Cardinal of Portugal at San Miniato, Ilaria del Carretto in the Cathedral of Lucca—make less demand upon the faculty of composition, because the attitude is one of sleep or death, and so it need not suggest possibilities of movement. Such works of statuary, moreover, owing to their position can only be regarded from two or three points of view.

In painting, the principles of composition are both simpler and more complicated. They are simpler inasmuch as a picture, being a flat superficies, cannot be regarded from several points of view, and therefore the figures which it represents have not to be studied with regard to varied harmony of outline. It is more complicated because form, perspective, colour, light, and shadow are bound to contribute to one effect of unity. In a well-composed picture all these elements must be brought into accord. If we start with the cartoon in outline for a painting, we find that the several forms of which it is composed have been so arranged as to balance each other; the scheme of lines presents agreeable rhythms whereby each

part is made subordinate to a totality. If we proceed to a sepia sketch for the same painting, we notice that the unity of effect already gained by interpenetrating interflowing lines is further strengthened by the distribution of light and dark upon similar principles of balance. When at length we view the picture finished on the painter's easel, we see that colour has been managed upon fundamentally the same principle. Only the greatest masters of the brush have been able to combine perfect balance of form, perfect balance of chiaroscuro, and perfect balance of colour in a single composition. Sculpturesque painters, like Michel Angelo, attend principally to composition by lines, subordinating the play of light and shadow, and tinting with parsimony or timidity. Some of the less highly-gifted Venetian painters, men like Bonifazio, are contented with composition by colour, neglecting the balance and grouping of their figures. Tintoretto, who often seems careless about his linear design, obtains the most striking effects of composition by his marvellously powerful distribution of light and dark in counterbalancing masses. Fra Bartolommeo and the Florentines in general rely more than is desirable upon geometrical schemes of linear composition, so that the pyramidal arrangement assumes a kind of tyranny in their paintings. Rubens, with his keen relish for nature, discards this mechanical assist-

ance, trusting to the life which plays so vigorously in each part of his work. Few attain to the consummate artistic harmony which characterises the best pictures of Andrea del Sarto. He seems to deserve his title of "faultless" principally by having known how to unite the three elements of composition—line, colour, chiaroscuro—in reciprocally helpful harmony.

The necessity for composition in art might be deduced not only from the natural craving of the mind after symmetry and rhythm, but also from art's relative incapacity to rival nature. The model is in movement, the multitude is swaying to and fro, the landscape varies with cloud-shadows and changing atmospheric effects; but statue and picture must be stationary. They arrest the life of Nature at an instant; they select one suggestion from the multiplicity of her suggestions; they are symbols, and not copies of the object as it meets our sensuous perception. Art is accordingly bound to introduce an equivalent for what it cannot represent. Like ideal beauty, composition is a compensation offered to the subjectivity of man. From this we might once more deduce the corollary that art cannot abide contented with bare imitation. Man's soul speaks to man's soul from the picture, and says something which nature does not say.

No one will, however, deny that everywhere

in nature, especially in sublime landscape or in exceptionally perfect single figures, the most consummate composition may be observed. In nature, however, such composition is fugitive. We return to the landscape and find that altered light or atmosphere has spoiled the picture; the linear balance is still there, the rest has vanished. The model drops an upraised arm, and the momentary magic of his attitude, complete in sculpturesque variety of rhythm, is dispersed. It is the artist's duty, while making himself the secretary of Nature's shyest thoughts and the interpreter of her secluded mysteries, to perpetuate these fugitive perfections in work which cannot pass away. While assuming this function he collaborates with Nature, and becomes himself, through the infusion of his spirit, a portion of the picture he produces.

IV.

This leads us to consider expression as one of the factors which constitute the so-called ideality of art. Expression, in its relation to sculpture and painting, is a word of double meaning. It may mean the expression which resides in the object itself, which the artist seeks to seize and to render as powerfully as he can—the expression which belongs to a good portrait. Or it may mean the expression of subjective thought and feeling, not inherent in the object, for which the forms of

art are vehicles. I shall deal at present only with expression in the second of these senses.

I need not observe that much difference of opinion exists as to whether artists ought to aim deliberately at expressing thoughts and emotions. The elder schools of criticism assumed, perhaps too confidently, that such expression is the ultimate end and highest function of art. They could point, in justification of this view, to the best examples of Hellenic sculpture and Italian painting. It is obvious that both Greeks and Italians aimed at embodying psychological qualities nicely discriminated, powerfully marked, and subtly graduated, in their work. The Italians went farther, and attempted to set forth episodes of religious and secular history with dramatic vividness. But younger students of the arts advance a counter theory, to the effect that it is not the prime function of the fine arts to externalise a thought or an emotion, so much as to create beautiful schemes of form, colour, light and shade, in harmony with nature. These critics support their opinion by pointing to the failure of dramatic, historical, religious, sentimental art-work during the last two centuries. In fact, we are here once more facing the old antithesis of idealism and realism under another aspect. As before, the problem must be met and dealt with by a clear intelligence of terms and a perception of the correlation between apparent opposites.

I have already tried to establish the principle that every product of figurative art, however simple, is subject to conditions which differentiate a draughtsman from a machine. It must reveal something of the nature of personal thought and feeling. The only question is how far this revelation or expression can be legitimately carried; whether it should be left to the spontaneous exhibition of the artist's temperament through style, or whether the artist should aim at uttering the thought of his brain, the emotion of his heart, through forms selected with deliberate intention for the purpose.

This question turns first upon the choice of subjects and the artist's faculty to grapple with them; secondly, upon the consideration whether there are not limits to art which render some subjects, although legitimate enough in poetry or fiction, unfit for figurative presentation.

There can be no doubt that when Pheidias planned the Olympian Zeus, which typified the Supreme Deity for Hellas, he intended to express as much definite specific thought as he could put into a noble figure. There can be equally no doubt that Lionardo's Christ in the Last Supper, Raphael's Madonna di San Sisto, Tintoretto's Christ before Pilate, are attempts upon the part of their respective painters to express thoughts no less definite and specific. Whatever other excellencies these

masterpieces may display, their crowning merit in their makers' eyes was certainly expression. We cannot name a Faun, a Hermes, an Aphrodite, a Pallas, among Greek statues, not a St. Sebastian, a St. John, a Magdalene, a Catherine of Siena, among Italian pictures, which does not express some salient subjective quality. The main difference between Greek and Italian work in this respect is that the Pagan mythology lent itself better than the Christian to artistic characterisation. What I mean is that the Greek Pantheon contained an inexhaustible number of clearly marked and well distinguished personalities ; the several qualities of human nature were presented in concrete form by those ideal beings, each of whom had a separate legend. Christian saints, upon the other hand, are all formed upon one model of holiness, faith, humility, self-sacrifice, chastity, and so forth. As Goethe remarked to Eckermann, while showing him a group of Christ with the Twelve Apostles : " These forms are but poor subjects for sculpture. One apostle is always much like another, and very few have enough life and action connected with them to give them character and significance." It follows, therefore, that whereas Here, Aphrodite, Artemis, Pallas, can be at once distinguished by the type invented for them by the artist, it is necessary to give St. Catherine of Alexandria a broken wheel, St. Sebastian an arrow, St. Agnes a lamb, St. Lucy

a pair of eyes upon a plate, in order to explain them. But to return from this excursion. Expression obviously determines the composition of the Dying Gladiator, the Laocoön, the mosaic of the Battle of the Issus, the fresco of the Bridal in the Vatican. No less does expression rule Raphael's School of Athens, Tintoretto's Crucifixion at San Rocco, Giotto's allegories at Assisi, Michel Angelo's Sibyls and Prophets in the Sistine Chapel. These statues and pictures must always be classed among the highest achievements of art, and they owe their rank to the fact that, in each case, sculptor and painter aimed consciously at expressing certain thoughts and certain emotions.

Another list of examples might be adduced from antique and modern masterpieces, in which the expression of ideas would not be so obvious. I will select the Apoxyomenos of the Vatican (a young athlete scraping his right arm with the strigil), and Tintoretto's Bacchus and Ariadne. Personally, I prefer this statue and this picture to any other statues and any other pictures I have seen; and I am well aware that they affect me intellectually and emotionally, only in the same subtle way as music does. In other words, they express things vaguer, more remote, but not less real to the soul, than thought and language do. The secret of their power is the communication of a mood. This does not, then, reverse the position that the figurative arts are

arts of expression. Definitely or vaguely, with deliberate intention or by spontaneous suggestiveness, the work of art speaks to our spirit.

To be dramatic is not the prime function of the figurative arts. They cannot imitate the suffering depicted on the face of a man who is being tortured to death. They cannot rival the natural look of terror in a man threatened with sudden assassination. They cannot do these things with success, and therefore they ought to refrain from the attempt. That is the reason why the *Laocoön*, though dramatically and realistically feeble, exceeds the bounds of sculptural expression, while Titian's *Peter Martyr* trembled dangerously on the verge of the theatrical. But within their limits of harmonious beauty, of composition and of rhythmic repose, these arts can *suggest* action, passion, struggle, aspiration, anguish, with a penetrative depth which rescues such motions of the soul from the sphere of the transitory, and confers on them the permanence of style.

Since the publication by Lessing of his *Laocoön*, this limitation of the plastic arts has been accepted as axiomatic, and its truth is daily proved by the study of the best work. I believe, however, that the same principle might equally well be deduced from the fact on which I have so often insisted, namely, the relative inferiority of art to nature. Incapable of rivalling reality in its own sphere, the

arts assert compensatory advantages, by the adroit use of their limitations and by the introduction of subjective elements. Among the latter have to be reckoned the controlling sense of beauty and the feeling for composition on which I have already dwelt, together with those qualities of sympathy, reserve, delicacy, self-restraint, those preferences for refinement, those tendencies making for spiritual progress rather than for relapse into bestial conditions, which constitute humanity. It is obvious that no art is capable of adequately imitating the agony depicted on the face of a man dying a slow death by torture, because it cannot follow all the phases of that agony. It dares not represent some of the more revolting details of crucifixion, for example—*proluvies ventris et vesicæ*—dislocation of limbs by restless writhing, spasmodic convulsion of nerves and muscles. It is both unable and unwilling to carry expression to extremity. Here, then, as elsewhere, lack of power to be literally realistic combines with the display of subjectivity, and we reach the artistic mean in idealistic representation.

V.

Characterisation is no longer the expression of a thought or feeling, a passion or a sentiment, intended by the artist and impressed upon his transcript from the model. It implies an effort

and Campanella. Why is this? The former are vicious and the latter would indeed be difficult to prevent; but because Michel Angelo was man of terrible character is profitable to men in no way and there was a lamentable sign of heretical degeneration.

So far as it goes, then, the Italian Renaissance tends to establish that while art is only compensatory. But there is another view which the seeming paradox has to be regarded. Its eminent plastic-art history, but pictorial with additional expansion into the study and service, as in home-ware, plate, armour, weapons, weapons, and so forth. This kind of art, is only remotely connected to the refinement it implies in such behaviour, with prodigious devotion. Granting then, that such a view functions, incoherence in their public and private life, the sale of arguments, rhetorical ability, their formal rhetorical ideal for Europe, the

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to penetrate and then to represent the essential character of his model in the most forcible way. In its highest form it exercises the imaginative faculty possessed by the greater portrait-painters, which enables them to pierce below the surface, and to use the physical as index to the spiritual qualities of men and women. It may, however, be limited to the vigorous delineation of salient points, and to the accentuation of marked peculiarities. In the latter case characterisation borders upon caricature. In all cases it implies a willing sacrifice of superficial beauty for the sake of force and uncompromising veracity. Through vigorous characterisation, through the mental power displayed in it, ugliness may be raised to sublimity, and even the revolting may obtain the power to fascinate. Instead of being realistic, this is one of the most idealistic functions of art. The dwarfs of Velasquez—Titian's terrible old woman with the scroll "*Col Tempo*"—cannot be claimed by realism. The intensity of selective insight exhibited in these works places them in the ideal category as surely as any Genius by Michel Angelo upon the vaulting of the Sistine Chapel. Interpretation of the object reaches its climax here.

VI.

It will seem, I expect, to many of my readers that I have been elaborately proving a truism in the foregoing pages, the aim of my argument being

to show that art cannot dispense with an element of ideality or exist apart from the expression of thought or feeling. Still it is always well, in matters so intangible as æsthetic criticism, to start by claiming nothing which does not admit of demonstration. The less we postulate, the firmer will our ground be in the future.

The final truth impressed upon my own mind by the analysis attempted in these three essays is that everything which man can do in imitation of nature falls short of the fact, as fact. We cannot make the image of a tree, or a flower, or a man, which shall yield us one-tenth part of the pleasure or the wonder which the sight of the tree, the flower, the living man yields. Who can reproduce by pigments the luminous texture of a lily chalice or the sheeny velvet of a pelargonium petal? It is impossible to relate a story or to act a drama which shall contain as much of poignant interest as what happens daily to thousands of our fellow-creatures on this planet. The whole hell of Dante is as nothing in sheer intensity when tested by the night hours of a tortured conscience; and even Sappho's odes seem calm beside a lover's actual palpitations. Therefore this function of man's intellect, called art, and classified since Aristotle's epoch under the title of Imitation, is, in comparison with the object imitated, "as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine."

As a merely mimetic process, art is so conspicuously a failure, whether we take drama, lyric, work of fiction, statue, or painting into account, that its pretension to be realistic in the technical sense of that word must pass for a piece of impertinence and self-inflated ignorance. Aristotle has much to answer for, since he it was who first used the phrase *Mimesis*, or imitation, and treated the arts from that starting-point. He set reflection on the wrong track, instead of making it at once clear that we must look for something else in the arts, and that imitation is only a condition under which they partially fulfil their common task.

It is indeed the duty of all arts faithfully to follow in the steps of Nature, to create nothing without her sanction, to read her book at morn, and noon, and eventide, and never to deviate from her teaching. But they must resign the attempt to do again what Nature does. They must give up the ambition to be unconditionally realistic, flawlessly naturalistic. They must recognise the fact that they cannot rival the sun in his draughtsman-ship, or the mirror-surface of a mountain tarn in its veracity of reproduction.

To humbler functions, awful power,
I call thee !

Yes, indeed, to functions humbler in one sense but loftier in another, for art obeys the freedom of

the spirit, and is restrained by limitations very different in quality from those necessities under which mechanical copies of nature are evolved.

The whole province of the human intellect and emotion is art's sphere, wherein to expatiate with the untrammelled liberty and creative power of mind. Not the heights alone, but the depths also of humanity lie unveiled before the artist. The forms he uses are but symbols, whereby he speaks as soul to soul. To him it is given to effect a real new birth of beauty, by baptizing nature in the rivers of the spirit. To him again it is given to display the moral ugliness of vice, the pathos of suffering, the tragic fate of heroes. Nothing within the range of man's capacity is wholly alien to art. Great races have consigned their most earnest aspirations, their strivings after a solution of "the riddle of this painful earth," their inflexible codes of conduct, to the forms of art; and naught survives of them but sphinx-like figures carved on rocks in wildernesses, or mystic shapes half buried in the tangles of primeval forests. Yet from these dead stones the spirit still speaks through art, still tells us by what faiths those men who were our ancestors both lived and died. Nor this alone, but whatsoever is capricious, fascinating, superficially delightful, evanescently fragrant to the soul in reverie, obeys the artist's touch. And the lyre of art is an instrument of five chords. Architecture, sculpture,

painting, poetry, music, are the strings upon which the genius of art plays, according to the diverse nature of the spiritual message which human mind conveys to mind through sensuous impressions. Only two of these are bound to imitation of the outer world ; and they use imitation for the utterance of what is integral with mind.

It is the privilege of art to quicken feeling, and to lead our soul through all the labyrinths of life as in a vision. Sculpture and painting, in particular, teach us to see what is noteworthy in the form of man and in the face of nature. Not many weeks ago, I walked in the light of a mellow July sunset along the Serpentine, watching the crowd of men and lads who bathe there. I recognised how impossible it would be to reproduce in its complexity of interest and beauty what I saw before me—the space, the atmosphere, the massive trees, the luminosity of sky above, the sheeny, troubled surface of the pond, and above all, the innumerable groups and changeful attitudes of naked men in every posture. And yet, at the same time, it was borne in upon my mind that only through the service of art, through the labour of Greek sculptors and the industry of modern painters, was I at the proper point for discerning what this common scene contained of beauty and of interest. No painting could place in right relation to the whole and

to the parts the multiplicity of marvels it offered to my vision. No sculpture could fix and perpetuate the grace inseparable from movement in those men and lads. But except for years of training under this influence, should I have had the eyes to see and the spirit to admire what was revealed to me?

Art satisfies the desire of man for fidelity of record, for excellence of workmanship, and for permanence. It gratifies our sense of ingenuity. It enables us to enjoy summer in winter, poetry among prosaic circumstances, the country in the town, woodland and river in the sick-room, open air and joyousness in prisons—or in what is often tantamount to prison, in our daily life. All this it achieves by means of its wonderful shadow-work of forms; and it can do this, as nature cannot, for generations which succeed each other like the leaves of kindly seasons. It is even more poignant than nature, by reason of the sympathy between the artist's mind and ours. It satisfies the infantine and ever-present longing for romance in human hearts—the thirst to view things nobler and less tiresome than we hourly find them; the yearning for companionship with heroic souls; the hunger to be bathed in turbulent passions and be purified by their expansion; the aspiration to behold the world more clearly and with deeper intuition; the curiosity to be present at perilous adventures and

at the crisis of great destinies, if only in a vision. It fills up, in one word, that void of our daily experience, which is alluded to in the French saying: "*Rien n'est si joli que la fable, si triste que la vérité.*"

The world which art creates for us is like the Greek Elysium. In it exist the unsubstantial shades

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Human tragedies removed into this Elysian sphere lose their brutality, and shock our sense no longer. Human joys are divested of their crude excitement. The æsthetic emotion does not stimulate pain or pleasure in the same degree as the immediate emotions. Consequently, it does not lead to action, whether of pursuit or of avoidance. The self within us, powerfully played upon by images of suffering or delight, remains quiescent, sterile of endeavour, steeped in the luminous atmosphere of reverie. The beautiful, as Kant said, is the object of a disinterested satisfaction. And this is probably what Aristotle had in his mind when he defined the end of tragedy to be a purification of the emotions through pity and terror.

“To allay the perturbation of the mind and set the affections in right tune,” wrote Milton in his panegyric of the poet’s function. Before entering art’s Elysium, the life of man drinks Lethe; we know that sorrows will be tempered there to sadness, acute passions robbed of their sting, memories refined to a faint echo of experience. Yet though the emotions stimulated by art are unfruitful of act, sterile of energy, purged of their selfish element, they are none the less real and serious. They possess a notable power over the formation of character. One effect of art has been too little observed by writers upon ethics. It is the arousing in us of what may be called indefinite illimitable desire. A desire which is tyrannous, precisely because it is vague, because its rhythms, excited by intangibilities, react upon the finest and remotest fibres of our being. The bearing of this remark can best perhaps be illustrated by an example. Hazlitt relates that, when he read the last scene between the lovers in Schiller’s *Don Carlos*, he was left with “a deep sense of suffering and a strong desire after good, which has haunted me ever since.” Those words sufficiently describe the stirring of the soul effected by great art; and upon the moral quality of the work of art which stimulates this indefinite desire, will depend much of the moral temper of the man who feels it.

The desire haunts him through his life, and is rooted in the recollection of the work which called it forth. It may be the pathos of Cordelia's death in *King Lear* which evoked the emotion ; it may be Plato's rapturous description of love in the *Phædrus*. We may owe its presence in our being to the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel, or we may derive it from

That most perfect of antiques
They call the Genius of the Vatican,
Which seems too beauteous to endure itself
In this mixed world.

As dreams of the night bring us home to ourselves and discover hidden fountain-heads of passion, so this indefinite illimitable desire, which art excites, creates for those who feel it lasting habits of emotion. The recurrent vibrations of that desire, the persistent images with which it is connected, the mode in which we have been touched to fine pervasive spiritual issues, remain with us for good or evil, abiding witnesses to art's controlling power.

But how is art enabled to do all this? Not by rivalling the draughtsmanship of the sun and the accuracy of a mechanical process. Nay, rather by the exercise of human faculties alone—purged insight, fiery yet patient imagination, earnest thought, love of the best things, ever-eager selection of the highest man can rise to, strong

planning and strenuous application to the execution of the plan. The whole macrocosm and all creatures of God, from the cedar of Libanus to the hyssop upon the wall, from Priam among the burning palaces of Troy-town to the boors of a Dutch tavern, from an Olympian athlete to an idle apprentice, from Achilles and S. Francis to Tom Jones and Parson Andrews, lie open to artistic representation. The artist at any hour calls up scenes we cannot see with our own eyes. He transports us from Camberwell to Athens, from Baker Street to the Great Pyramid, from a ball in Belgravia to the dances of Titania's elves. Yet the magic wand of this Prospero is nothing else but the artist's own mind, which stirs our mind and puts before our eyes the vision. Try as he may do to escape from the conditions under which he labours, he will find that he does not make things as they are, but as they exist for his consciousness; and all his realistic skill must finally subserve the expression of the thought and the emotion which himself contains.

CARICATURE, THE FANTASTIC, THE GROTESQUE.

I.

CARICATURE is a distinct species of characterisation, in which the salient features of a person or an object have been emphasized with the view of rendering them ridiculous. The derivation of this word justifies my definition. It comes from the Italian *caricare*, to charge with a burden, or to surcharge. Thus *caricare un ritratto* means to exaggerate what is already prominent in the model, and in this way to produce a likeness which misrepresents the person, while it remains recognisable. Instead of emphasis, simple distortion may be used to secure the effect of caricature. For example, the hints suggested by reflection in a spoon are amplified into an absurd portrait. Some faces and figures lend themselves better to the concave, others to the convex surface of the spoon. Or a fairly accurate image of a man or woman, modelled in gutta-percha, may be pulled about in various directions, with the result of producing

a series of burlesque portraits, in which the likeness of the individual is never wholly lost.

The most effective kind of caricature does not proceed by such distortion. It renders its victim ludicrous or vile by exaggerating what is defective, mean, ignoble in his person, indicating at the same time that some corresponding flaws in his spiritual nature are revealed by them. The masterpieces of this art are those in which truth has been accentuated by slight but deft and telling emphasis. Nothing, as Aretino once remarked, is more cruel than malevolent insistence upon fact. You cannot injure your neighbour better than by telling the truth about him, if the truth is to his discredit. You cannot make him appear ridiculous more crushingly than by calling attention to real faults in his physique.

Those extraordinary caricatures of human faces which Lionardo da Vinci delighted to produce, illustrate both methods of emphasis and distortion. But they also exhibit the play of a fantastic imagination. He accentuated the analogies of human with bestial features, or degraded his models to the level of goitred idiots by subtle blurrings and erasures of their nobler traits.

Caricature is not identical with satire. Caricature implies exaggeration of some sort. The bitterest satire hits its mark by no exaggeration, but by indignant and unmerciful exposure of

ignobility. Yet caricature has always been used for satirical purposes, with notable effect by Aristophanes in his political comedies, with coarse vigour by Gilray in lampoons of the last century, with indulgent humour by our contemporary *Punch*.

The real aim of caricature is to depreciate its object by evoking contempt or stirring laughter, when the imaginative rendering of the person is an unmistakable portrait, but defects are brought into relief which might otherwise have escaped notice. Instead therefore of being realistic, this branch of art must be reckoned as essentially idealistic. In so far as a caricature is powerfully conceived, it calls into play fine, though never the noblest, never the most amiable, qualities of interpretation.

II.

The fantastic need have no element of caricature. It invariably implies a certain exaggeration or distortion of nature ; but it lacks that deliberate intention to disparage, which lies at the root of caricature. What we call fantastic in art results from an exercise of the capricious fancy, playing with things which it combines into arbitrary non-existent forms. These may be merely graceful, as is the case with arabesques devised by old Italian painters—frescoed patterns upon walls and

ceilings, in which tendrils of the vine, acanthus foliage, parts of beasts and men and birds and fabulous creatures are brought into quasi-organic fusion with candelabra, goblets, lyres, and other familiar objects of utility.

In its higher manifestations fantastic art creates beautiful or terrific forms in correspondence with some vision of the excited imagination. The sphinx and the dragon, the world-snake of Scandinavian mythology, Shakespeare's Ariel, Dante's Lucifer, are fantastic in this higher sense. In them real conditions of man's subjective being have taken sensuous shape at the bidding of creative genius. The artist, while giving birth to such fantastic creatures of imagination, resembles a deeply-stirred and dreaming man, whose brain projects impossible shapes to symbolise the perturbations of his spirit. Myth and allegory, the metamorphosis of mortals into plants, fairies, satyrs, nymphs, and tutelary deities of sea or forest, are examples of the fantastic in this sphere of highest poetry.

According to the view which I have just expressed, fantastic art has to be considered as the least realistic of all artistic species; it is that in which the human mind shows its ideality, its subjective freedom, its independence of fact and external nature, most completely. Here a man's studies of reality outside him, acute and pene-

trating as these may be, become subservient to the presentation of thoughts and emotions which have no validity except for his internal consciousness.

He will watch from dawn till gloom
The lake-reflected sun illumine
The yellow bees in the ivy bloom,
Nor heed nor see what things they be,
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality.

When well constructed, powerfully conceived, vigorously projected, with sufficiency of verisimilitude to give them rank among extraordinary phenomena, and with sufficient correspondence to the natural moods of human thought, these phantasies and their appropriate shapes acquire a reality of their own, and impose upon the credulity of mankind. They are felt to be actual through the force with which their makers felt them, and through their adaptation to the fancies of imaginative minds in general. Thus the chimæra of Hellenic sculpture, the horned and hooped devil of mediæval painting, Shakespeare's Caliban, Milton's Death, Goethe's Mephistopheles, can all be claimed as products of fantastic art. Yet these figments are hardly less real for our consciousness than the Farnese bull, Lancelot, Landseer's stags, Hamlet, Dr. Brown's Rab, Adam Bede, and other products of imaginative art which

are modelled from familiar objects. In this way fantastic art strikingly brings home to us the truth of what Tasso once said: *Non è creatore se non Iddio ed il poeta* (God and the poet are the only creators). It does this because it proves that the recombining power of the imagination, as in dreams, so also in poetry and plastic art, is able to construct unrealities which possess even more than the spiritual influence and all but the validity of fact for human minds.

III.

The grotesque is a branch of the fantastic. Its specific difference lies in the fact that an element of caricature, whether deliberately intended or imported by the craftsman's spontaneity of humour, forms an ingredient in the thing produced. Certain races and certain epochs display a predilection for the grotesque, which is conspicuously absent in others. Hellenic art, I think, was never intentionally grotesque, except on rare occasions in the comedy of Aristophanes. What resembles grotesqueness in the archaic stages of Greek sculpture—in the bas-reliefs from Selinus, for example—must be ascribed to *naïveté* and lack of technical skill. On the contrary, Lombard sculpture, as we study this on the façades of North Italian churches, and mediæval Teutonic art in general, as we study this upon the pages of illustrated manuscripts, in

the choir-stalls of our cathedrals, or in the carven ornaments of their exteriors, rarely fails to introduce some grotesque element. The free play of the Northern fancy ran over easily into distortion, degradation of form, burlesque. Scandinavian poetry of the best period exhibits striking specimens of Aristophanic satire, in which the gods are mercilessly dealt with. Grotesqueness may be traced in all the fantastic beings of Celtic and Germanic folk-lore — in gnomes inhabiting the mountains, in kelpies of the streams and mermaids of the ocean, in Puck and Robin Goodfellow, in fairies of heath and woodland, in the princesses of Border ballad-literature fated by magic spells to dree their doom as loathly dragons.

Of such grotesqueness I doubt whether we can discern a trace in classical mythology and art. Ugly stories about Zeus and Cronos, quaint stories about the metamorphoses of Proteus, and the Phorcydes with their one eye, are not grotesque. They lack the touch of caricature, always a conscious or semi-conscious element, which is needful to create the species.

This element is absent in the voluminous literature of the Arabs, as that is known to us through the "Arabian Nights." Princesses transformed into parrots, djinns with swarthy faces doting on fair damsels, water-carriers converted by some spell into caliphs, ghouls, animals that talk, immense birds

brooding over treasures in the wilderness, are not grotesque. They lack the touch of conscious caricature added to free fancy which differentiates the species.

Both caricature and the fantastic played an important part in Southern and Eastern literature, but they did not come into the peculiar connection which is necessary to grotesqueness. The fantastic made itself moderately felt in Hellas, and assumed gigantic proportions in Islam. The Asiatic and Greek minds, however, lacked a quality which was demanded in order to elicit grotesqueness from phantasy. That quality the Teutonic section of the Aryan family possessed in abundance; it was all-pervasive in the products of their genius. We may define it broadly as humour. I do not deny humour to the Greeks and Orientals; but I contend that Teutons have the merit of applying humour to caricature and the fantastic, so as to educe from both in combination what we call grotesqueness.

For obvious reasons I must omit all mention of what strikes us as grotesque in the art-work of races with whom we are imperfectly in sympathy. Hindoo idols, Chinese and Japanese bronzes, Aztec bas-reliefs, and such things, seem to us grotesque. But it is almost impossible to decide how far this apparent grotesqueness is due to inadequate comprehension on our part, or to religious symbolism. We cannot eliminate the element of

genuine intentional grotesqueness which things so far remote from us contain.

IV.

Closely allied to caricature and the grotesque we find obscenity. This indeed has generally entered into both. The reason is not far to seek. Nothing exposes human beings to more contemptuous derision than the accentuation in their persons of that which self-respect induces them to hide. Indecency is therefore a powerful resource for satirical caricaturists. Nothing, again, in the horse-play of the fancy comes readier to hand than the burlesque exhibition of things usually concealed. It appeals to the gross natural man, upon whose sense of humour the creator of grotesque imagery wishes to work, and with whom he is in cordial sympathy.

Indecency has always been extruded from the temple of art, and relegated to slums and dubious places in its precincts. Why is this? Perhaps it would suffice to answer that art is a mirror of human life, and that those things which we exclude from social intercourse are consequently excluded from the æsthetic domain. This is an adequate account of the matter. But something will be gained for the understanding of art in general if we examine the problem with more attention.

Shelley lays it down as an axiom that all obscenity implies a crime against the spiritual nature of man. This dictum takes for granted an advanced state of society, when merely sensual functions have come to be regarded with sensitive modesty. In other words, it defines the essence of obscenity to be some cynical or voluptuous isolation of what is animal in man, for special contemplation by the mind. Savages recognise nothing indecent in things which we consider highly improper. Our ancestors spoke without a blush about matters which could not now be mentioned before a polite company. This is because savages and people of the Elizabethan age were naïve, where we have become self-conscious. Thus Shelley's *crimen læsæ majestatis* varies with the age and the conditions of civility in which men live. Much that is treasonable here and now against the spiritual nature of humanity was unassailable two hundred years ago, and is still respectable in the tropics. The point at issue is to decide what constitutes a violation of local and temporal decorum in this respect. Such violation is obscenity; and the conditions vary almost imperceptibly with the growth of society, but always in favour of decorum.

There are many things allowable, nay laudable, in act, which it is unpermissible to represent in figurative art or to dwell upon in poetry. Yet

these things imply nothing ugly. On the contrary, they are compatible with the highest degree of natural beauty. Even Aretino's famous postures, if painted with the passion of Giorgione, could not be pronounced unbeautiful. Such motives abound in juxtapositions of forms and in contrasts of physical types, which yield everything the painter most desires for achieving his most ambitious triumphs. The delineation of these things, however, though they are allowable and laudable in act, though they are plastically beautiful, offends our taste and is intolerable. If we ask why this is so, the answer, I think, must be that civilisation only accepts art under the condition of its making for the nobler tendencies of human nature. In truth, I have approached the present topic, in spite of its difficulty, mainly because it confirms the views I hold regarding the dependence of the arts on ethics.

There are acts necessary to the preservation of the species, functions important in the economy of man ; but these, by a tacit consensus of opinion, we refuse to talk about, and these therefore we are unwilling to see reflected in art's spiritual looking-glass. We grudge their being brought into the sphere of intellectual things. We feel that the representation of them, implying as this does the working of the artist's mind and our mind on them, contradicts a self-preservative instinct which

has been elaborately cultivated through unnumbered generations for the welfare of the social organism. Such representation brings before the sense in figure what is already powerful enough in fact. It stirs in us what education tends to curb, and exposes what humane culture teaches us to withdraw from observation.

This position admits of somewhat different statement. At a certain point art must make common cause with morality, and the plastically beautiful has to be limited by ethical laws. Man is so complex a being, and in the complex of his nature the morally trained sensibilities play so prominent a part, that art, which aims at giving only elevated enjoyment, cannot neglect ethics. Without being didactic it must be moralised, because the normal man is moralised. If it repudiates this obligation, it errs against its own ideal of harmony, rhythm, repose, synthetic beauty. It introduces an element which we seek to subordinate in life, and by which we are afraid of being mastered. It ceases to be adequate to humanity in its best moments, and these best moments art has undertaken to present in forms of sensuous but dignified loveliness.

Most people will agree upon this point. There remains, however, considerable difference of opinion as to the boundaries which art dares not overpass—as to what deserves the opprobrious title of

indecent in plastic or poetic presentation. Some folk seem inclined to ban the nude without exception, relegating the grandest handiwork of God, the human form divine, to the obscurity of shrouded vestments. Disinclined as I am to adopt this extreme position, I admit that just here the cleanness or uncleanness of the artist's mind, as felt in his touch on doubtful subjects, becomes a matter of ethical importance. All depends on taste, on method of treatment, on the tone communicated, on the mood in which matters of delicacy have been viewed. Tintoretto elevates our imagination by his pictures of Eve tempting Adam; Michel Angelo restrains and chastens wandering fancy; Raphael removes the same theme beyond the sphere of voluptuous suggestion, while retaining something of its sensuous allurements; Rembrandt produces a cynical satire in the style of Swift's description of Yahoos; Luca Giordano disgusts by coarse and full-blown carnalism.

V.

These considerations lead us finally to inquire in what sphere of human sensibility the arts legitimately move.

It is usual to distinguish between æsthetic and non-æsthetic senses—meaning by the former sight and hearing, by the latter touch, taste, smell. In truth, no great art has yet been based upon the

three last-mentioned senses, in the same way as painting and sculpture have been based on sight and music upon hearing. This is because the two so-called æsthetic senses are links between what is spiritual in us and external nature; we use them in the finer operations of our intelligence. The three non-æsthetic senses serve utility and natural needs; they have not been brought into that comity where thought and emotion can be sensuously presented to the mind. It is only by the faintest suggestions that a touch, a taste, a smell evokes some spiritual mood. When it does so the effect is indeed striking; we are thrilled in our very entrails and marrow. But these suggestions are, in our present condition, so vague, so elusive, so evanescent, so peculiar to the individual, that no attempt has been made to regard them as a substantial ground-work for the edifice of art.

In man we find an uninterrupted rhythm from the simplest to the most complex states of consciousness, passing from mere sensation up to elaborated thought. No break can be detected in this rhythm, although psychologists are wont to denote its salient moments by distinctive names. They speak of sensation, perception, emotion, will, reason, and so forth, as though these were separate faculties. But the infinite subtlety of nature eludes such rude attempts at classification. Art finds its proper sphere of operation only in the middle

region of the scale. The physical rudiments of consciousness are not æsthetic, because they bring our carnal functions into play, and only indirectly agitate the complex of our nature. The more abstract modes of thought are not æsthetic, because they have renounced the element of corporeity and sense; and art has to fulfil its function through sensuous presentation. Art is therefore obliged to cast roots down into sense, and to flower up into thought, remaining within the province where these extremes of consciousness interpenetrate. This is what Hegel meant when he called beauty *die sinnliche Erscheinung der Idee* (the apparition, to sense and in sense, of the idea)—a definition which, in spite of its metaphysical form, is precisely suited to express the fact.

Poetry, if I may apply these conclusions to the most purely intellectual of the arts, makes an appeal to thought, emotion, sense, together, in one blended harmony. If thought predominates too crudely, as in some cantos of Dante's "Paradiso," in some books of Lucretius, in many passages of Milton's and of Wordsworth's verse, then the external form of metre and poetic diction does not save the product from being prosaic. On the other hand, if a coarse appeal be made to sense through sound, as in a large portion of Marino's "Adone," we are cloyed by sweet vacuity. Or if, as in the case of Baffo's Venetian lyrics, the

Art is impassioned thought
— J. H. Symonds.

contents be deliberately prurient, awakening mere animal associations, then no form of sonnet, madrigal, or ode saves this poetry from being prosaic. It meets the same condemnation at the lower end of the scale, as we passed on parts of Dante, Lucretius, Milton, Wordsworth at the higher end. Purely intellectual and purely sensual poetry fail alike by contradicting the law of poetry's existence. They are not poetry, but something else.

Neither unmixed thought nor unmixed sense is the proper stuff of art. Still we must remember that art, occupying the middle region between these extremes, has to bring the manifold orchestra of consciousness into accord. Nowhere is there an abrupt chasm in man's sentient being. Touch, taste, smell, sex must be made to vibrate like the dull strings of bass-voils, to thrill like woody tubes of hautboys, to pierce like shrill yet mellow accents of the clarionet, to stir the soul like the tumultuous voices of brass instruments. Sight and hearing, through their keener intellectual significance, dominate this harmony; even as treble and tenor chords of violin and viola control a symphony. The final object of the whole concert is to delight and stimulate the mind, not to exercise the brain by logical propositions, nor to excite the appetite by indecent imagery. Precisely in this attunement of all the senses to the service of impassioned thought lies the secret of the noblest art.

"Unmixed thought = Browning
 Unmixed sense = Keats's *Endymion*
 The ideal = Goethe's *Faust Part I* or

NOTES ON STYLE.

Part II.

HISTORY AND USAGE OF THE WORD.

I.

THE etymology of words which we are wont to use in a figurative sense will often help us to form a right conception of the different shades of meaning attached to them by custom.

Style is derived from the Latin *stilus*; and *stilus* was the metal-pointed instrument with which the Romans wrote upon their waxen tablets. When Cicero employed the phrase, *orationes pœne Attico stilo scriptæ*, he meant to praise the diction of certain speeches which were written "almost with an Attic pen," or "almost in an Attic style." When he spoke of *stilus exercitatus*, this was equal to "the pen of a practised writer," or "a practised style." *Stilo Plautino* may be indifferently translated "with the pen of Plautus," or "in the style of Plautus."

Thus, during the golden period of Latin litera-

ture, the word *stilus* had already passed into the stage of metaphor. The mechanical instrument of writing was taken to indicate the manner in which anything was written, in the same way as we speak of the palette, the burin, or the pencil of artists to indicate the manner of their execution.

Modern scholars, at the time when European culture was still classical and Latin was the universal language, adopted this term naturally. But as no one now used a *stilus* in writing, the metaphor implied in it was not so obvious. The ancients, mindful of its etymology, had confined the word *style* to modes of writing, with rare and post-Augustan extension to modes of speaking. We have come to apply it to all the arts as well as to much besides. We speak of style in architecture, sculpture, painting, music; style in manners, style in law procedure; the style of royal or noble persons, the old and new style of chronology, the style in which a thing is done or carried out. We have even an adjective from the slang dictionary—*stylish*—to indicate a smart individual, carriage, horse, costume, and so forth.

This wide extension of the metaphor has induced a further usage, which bears us far away from the original instrument of writing. We talk of style in general, as a quality which some compositions display, while others lack it. We say of an author, not only that he is distinguished

by an Attic style or by a practised style, but also that "he has style." What we mean is that his work exhibits certain qualities of artistic distinction. And so we say of a picture: "Whatever its defects may be, everybody will confess that it possesses style."

Style, therefore, in its broadest signification, is now synonymous with mode of expression or presentation. When we praise a piece of prose for its style, we mean that thoughts have been clearly, precisely, powerfully, beautifully expressed in language. When we condemn a building for its style, we mean that the architect has employed a faulty system of construction, a vicious scheme of decoration, or an inharmonious distribution of parts.

The standard of what is good or bad in style varies with fashion and the age in which men live, with their conception of the purposes and functions of the arts, and also with the bias of successive schools of criticism. In the middle of the last century, the *Divine Comedy* was reckoned barbarous, and Gothic was a term of obloquy. At the beginning of this century, Pope met with scanty justice; and refined sensibility shrank with a shudder from the work of Wren.

Yet all judgments in such matters, however divergent they may be, imply the belief that there is a right and wrong in the arts of expression. Criticism aims at ascertaining what constitutes

excellence of style apart from changes of fashion, scholastic prejudices, and personal partialities. It seeks to discern and to interpret the goodness or the badness of each particular manifestation, according to the principles by which the artist has been governed, and not by the application of canons irrelevant to his age, race, and aims.

II.

Style, in literature, may be roughly described as the adequate investiture of thought with language. The best style is that in which no other verbal form could be imagined more appropriate for the utterance of thought than the one which has been given by the writer. "Proper words in proper places make the true definition of a style," said Swift. To seize *le mot propre* is the aim of those French authors who are our masters in literary expression regarded as a fine art. Between the thing thought, and the thing uttered, there ought to be no rift for the insertion of the finest edge of disjunctive analysis.

But here we are met with a preliminary problem. Is thought separable from language? Can language be said to have an existence apart from thought, or thought from language?

Scientific students, at the present day, will hardly dispute the priority of thought to language. The rudiments of thought exist in animals who

have no articulate speech. In certain states of the human consciousness—in dreams, for instance, and in those moods of the mind when images are brought suddenly into new and luminous relations—mental operations of the highest importance may be carried on without the intervention of language. We awake to ourselves and become aware of having reached conclusions, although we cannot recall the syllogistic process, and have, perhaps, some difficulty in finding words for what we know to be the real result of cerebration.

Language does not create thought. On the contrary, thought demands language for its utterance. For this very reason thought goes before language, and evokes it as an instrument. But language once created, the words which have been launched on their career, pregnant with antecedent thoughts, react upon the minds of those who use them. As the race exists now, the links of connection between language and thought are so complicated, and of such immemorial antiquity—words are so shot and coloured with past emotions and accepted meanings—that, in literature, thought, the stuff to be expressed, cannot be disentangled from its verbal vehicle. Body is not more inseparable from soul than style from thought, the language of expression from the mental matter to be uttered.

It might appear as though every thought had its inevitable symbol in language, and that style is

therefore uncontrollable. This, however, is not the case; for though thought needs the vehicle of words for utterance, it has so fashioned language that many modes of expression for the same idea or emotion are possible. That only one of these is the absolutely right one, will be admitted by those who have seriously studied the problem of style. Yet it is not given to all—nay, it is granted to a very few in each generation—to find the unerring, the inevitable phrase. The thinker has a wide range for choice and selection. He can deal with words to some extent in the same way as the painter deals with form and colour. In this sense language has an independence of its own, and may be considered external to the literary artist, just as marble is external to the sculptor and musical sound to the composer of a symphony. Later on, however, we shall see that the artist in language does not stand in the same relation to his vehicle as the artist in form, colour, tone.

Every thought then has its own fit and exact mould of language; and each variation of expression causes some modification of the thought to be expressed. The aim of art in writing is therefore to find that form of words which shall most aptly render the thought we seek to utter.

Attention to language and the niceties of style enables a man to acquire the faculty of bringing the subtlest, obscurest, most complicated thoughts

to light. What is called command of language is indispensable to a writer ; and this, though it implies natural endowment, may be largely improved by study.

Attention to thought enables a man possessed with a fair command of language to seize the words required for its expression. Clear thinking is the first requisite of a good style ; for if the thought be vague or feebly grasped, not all the powers of rhetoric will hide its poverty. Better precise and bald lucidity than nebulous magnificence of diction. But when the thought is clear, art may legitimately be exercised, not merely for the purpose of attaining veracity of expression, but also for clothing it with beauty, and decking it with ornament.

III.

This intimate connection of thought with language is the main reason why style differs in the hands of different writers. As a man habitually thinks and feels, so will he express himself. No one can divest himself of inborn personality ; and personality is bound to qualify diction. The colour-blind cannot describe landscape in the same way as those who are acutely sensitive to tints. The deaf to music move in a region apart from that in which tone-lovers dwell. These are coarse and obvious instances. Vocabulary, and not vocabulary alone, but rhythm, cadence, structure of

sentence, composition of paragraph, rhetoric, are all conditioned by the artist's individuality.

In like manner the languages of nations are formed by hereditary modes of thought and feeling, by ethnological and climatic conditions, by moral habits and religious ideals. These influences, continued through successive generations, mould the mother speech, and give it what we call its genius. The genius of a language is the genius of the race which made it. This becomes the common property of all the individuals who use it, and communicates a common quality to their style. Vary as men may do among themselves, they exhibit cognate ways of thinking, cognate ways of expressing what they think, through being members of one race and using one national language. An Italian cannot put into words exactly the same shade of thought as a German, or an Englishman as a Frenchman; the genius of the mother tongue in each case forbids identity of utterance. The truth of this has been acutely felt by all who have attempted to translate the poetry or the philosophy of another literature into their own language.

Style has therefore a double aspect, personal and national. The difficulty of translation, to which I have alluded, may serve to illustrate what is meant by this. Perfect translation from one language into another is impossible, because the personal and

national peculiarities of any single composition cannot be reproduced in a version which obeys the genius of a different language, and displays the idiosyncrasy of another writer. The style of the "*Æneid*," for example, was determined by the nature of Latin as used by Virgil. The style of Dryden's translation is still further qualified by the peculiarities of English as Dryden used it. If the style of the original is a double quantity (Latin + Virgil), the style of the translation is a quadruple quantity (Latin + Virgil combined with English + Dryden). This is putting the case roughly, and with a crudity which is almost grotesque. Not merely have two languages and two poets co-operated to produce the final result of the translation, but we have also to take into account the mental and moral changes in the world at large, which prevented Dryden from entering into exact sympathy with his original.

Thus, to sum up the main points of this section, we are forced to regard style from two points of view: as something which belongs to the individual through his mental and moral qualities, and through his greater or less command of language; and also as something which the individual derives from the tongue he uses, it being impossible to obtain precisely the same effects in Greek and Latin, French and German. The genius of the race and the genius of the man have both to be considered.

IV.

Hitherto we have been contemplating style subjectively, from the inside. We have considered it as verbal expression, indispensable to human beings in their utterance of thought through language. But we must also approach the problem objectively, from the outside. This we are enabled to do by the admitted fact that style can be controlled, and language artistically handled. "The style of an author should be the image of his mind," said Gibbon. That is the subjective aspect. "But," he continues, "the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise." That is the objective aspect.

It will be admitted that when we speak of style in literature, we are often thinking of an art whereby men more or less deliberately clothe their thought in language, and of an art which can to some extent be acquired. Words, as I have said above, are for the poet and prose-writer what lines and colours are for the painter, or form and marble for the sculptor. Thought is, however, so inextricably interwoven with language, and words react so subtly upon mental operations, that language cannot be regarded as a vehicle in the same way as the marble of the sculptor, the pigments of the painter, are plastic vehicles. It is possible, indeed, to treat language æsthetically : that is to say, with special

reference to its sonorous, rhythmical, suggestive, and symbolical qualities. Still the fact remains that thought demands language in the simplest no less than in the subtlest modes of utterance, whereby men may communicate with their neighbours; and so words come to the verbal artist surcharged with multitudinous associations. Thought does not demand colour, marble, tone in the ordinary intercourse of life. It uses these things at its pleasure and caprice, not for its necessities. The problem of style in literature is therefore *ab initio* different from that of style in any of the other arts. The writer has to obtain his effects by manipulating a material already pregnant with intellectual and emotional meanings. Nowhere is the connection between content and expression, mental subject-matter and artistic embodiment, more intimate, more vitally dependent upon the kindred essence of the two terms. Neither form in carven stone and painted superficies, nor sound in music, has the same mysterious relation to the human consciousness, the same approximation to identity with thought and feeling, the same diurnal and familiar reciprocity with mental processes, as words have. Thought is expressed, we say, in a statue or a picture or a symphony; but a poem is articulate thought.

Continuing analysis upon this second line, we are met with many uses of the word style, all

of which indicate the belief that it is an instrument to be employed at will, and an art to be acquired by cultivation. Thus style is spoken of as the power to express thought with polish, lucidity, correctness, vigour, beauty. We distinguish the style proper to poetry, rhetoric, argument; to tragedy and comedy; to history and fiction; to the eloquence of the pulpit, the senate and the forum; to scientific exposition and metaphysical speculation. We talk of the grand style and the pedestrian style, the epistolary style and the anecdotal style, the style of conversation and the style of description. In all the applications of the term it is implied that a man of taste and ability will modify his use of language to meet the special requirements of the task proposed. He will have learned by study to distinguish between different tones and values in the instrument of speech, and will have acquired by exercise the power of touching that mighty organ of expression to various issues. In this way, style comes to be regarded as a branch of rhetoric, capable of being reduced to rules, and within certain limits capable of being taught.

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Part II.

8 undoubtedly NATIONAL STYLE.

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LANGUAGE in a nation is an index to the mental and emotional character of the nation, to its hereditary antecedents and historical experience.

“What made the Jew a Jew, the Greek a Greek, is as unexplained as what daily causes the germs of an oak and of an ash to produce different trees. All we know is that, in the vague and infinitely distant past, races were nourished into form and individuality by the varied operation of those unreckoned sympathies which attach man to nature, his primitive mother. But the laws of that rudimentary growth are still unknown; ‘the abysmal deeps of personality’ in nations, as in men, remain unsounded; we cannot even experimentalise upon the process of ethnical development. Those mighty works of art which we call languages, in the construction of which whole peoples unconsciously co-operated, the forms of which were determined not by individual genius, but by the instincts of successive generations, acting to one end inherent in the nature of the race—those poems of pure thought and fancy, cadenced not in words, but in living imagery, fountain-heads of inspiration, mirrors of

the mind of nascent nations, which we call mythologies—these surely are more marvellous in their infantine spontaneity than any more mature production of the races which evolved them.”

These sentences I wrote many years ago ; and I resume them here, because they utter our abiding sense of the miracle of national character expressed in language and in myth. Still, though the science of origins throws as yet no light upon the birth of languages and the process whereby they became the symbols of each educated nation’s genius, it is not impossible to trace the biography of a people in the development of its mother-tongue, and the assimilation through speech of mental qualities derived from other races.

“Language,” says Walt Whitman, “is not an abstract construction of the learned, or of dictionary-makers, but is something arising out of the work, needs, ties, joys, affections, tastes, of long generations of humanity, and has its bases broad and low, close to the ground. Its final decisions are made by the masses, people nearest the concrete, having most to do with actual land and sea.”

That is true in the essential, in the cradle-age of races. But language early passes into a metaphorical stage, when words expressive of the concrete and material are applied to abstract and intellectual concepts — when the diaphragm be-

comes the mind, and the breath of man's nostrils becomes the soul, and to grasp a thing with the hand signifies to comprehend with the intelligence. Later on, as thought is forced deliberately to forge equivalents in speech for abstract ideas, the influence of individual thinkers begins to tell. Aristotle imposes the nomenclature of logic upon his nation, and through Greek literature upon posterity until the present day. Races intermingle, and assimilate religions, philosophies, systems of jurisprudence. At this point, by borrowing terms which do not suit their native genius, or by clumsy attempts at translation, they run the risk of absorbing elements imperfectly adapted to the ideas they are intended to express. A new mythology of abstractions comes into being. The *ὑπόστασις* of Greek metaphysic (originally ground-work or substratum, then real existence or substance) takes shape in the Latin Athanasian creed as *persona* (originally a mask and then a personage), and is repeated in our churches with mistaken connotation by the vulgar in the form of *person*.

During this process of growth, the style of the race manifests itself both by what it assimilates and by what it rejects, by its encouragement of tendencies inherent in the language and its dismissal of inconvenient factors, by its adoption of foreign phrases useful to some special purpose or

of metaphors and slang which suit new niceties of meaning, by the awkward adaptation of alien and inharmonious terms necessitated in the traffic of daily life, and finally by the exact and beautiful unfolding of those qualities in which its own strength lies. That language ultimately exhibits the highest capacity for style, which combines conservative respect for its native genius with plasticity, becoming by each phase of growth a more perfect instrument of unimpeded utterance, more receptive of ideas, and more assimilative without loss of character.

Thus the intellectual and emotional qualities of nations determine their style; and their history (contact with other races, submission to altered conditions of society, changes in religion, epochs of culture) is written in their literature. When the nation is a complicated hybrid, as is the case with us English folk, its style presents a complex problem not only to the philologist and etymologist, but also to the student of psychology. A chapter from "Modern Painters" would furnish the analyst with ample material for a lecture on comparative ethnology and the historical evolution of the English people.

II.

Of all languages Greek has the widest range and compass as an organ of expression. Not weight and gravity, but lightness, elasticity, volu-

bility, are its leading characteristics. Strength is so clothed with radiance and beauty (as in the godhood of the Delphian Apollo) that we think less of the power than of the grace of this divine tongue. Homer's phrase for human speech, ἔπει πτερόεντα, "winged words," is peculiarly true of Greek, with its variety of liquids, vowels, diphthongs, its gliding flow and twitter as of swallows on their flight, its garrulous profusion of reiterated particles. The blending of long and sonorous, yet never heavy, words with short and lightly feathered monosyllables—the perfect balance and even distribution of consonants and vowels—the richly developed accidence and syntax of the language—its three genders—the singular, dual, and plural numbers of its declined nouns—the complicated conjugation of its verbs, and the copiousness of their forms—all these qualities of a still youthful and prolific organ of speech endow Greek eloquence with unique pliability, rendering it no less fit for the simplicity of Simonidean epigraphy than for the rolling thunders of Demosthenic oratory.

We do not know how the Greek poets declaimed their verses. Having no clue to the antique pronunciation of the language and no correct sense of its accentual values, we feel their music with the eye rather than the ear, and lay an exaggerated stress on quantity. Yet such is

the indestructibility of form and rhythm in verbal harmonies fashioned for the utterance of noble thoughts, that even while labouring under these disadvantages, we are able to appreciate the grand manner of Greek style.

ὦ τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατασκαφῆς
οἴκησις αἰείφρουρος, οἱ πορεύομαι
πρὸς τοὺς ἑμαυτῆς, ὧν ἀριθμὸν ἐν νεκροῖς
πλεῖστον δέδεκται φερσέφασσ' ὀλωλότων·
ὧν λισσθία ἔγω καὶ κάκιστα δὴ μακρῶ
κάτειμι, πρὶν μοι μοῖραν ἐξήκειν βίου.

In reading this passage we need not summon imagination to our aid, nor bring before our mental eye the scene of Antigone advancing to her bridal bed in Hades. It is enough to feel the music of those opening lines, deep-toned and mellow as the chords of viols. Then take the declamatory swiftness of a wrathful adjuration :

τί δῆτα δόξης, ἢ τί κληδόνος καλῆς
μάτην ρεύουσης ὠφέλημα γίγνεται,
εἰ τὰς γ' Ἀθήνας φασὶ θεοσεβεστατας
εἶναι, μόνας δὲ τὸν κακούμενον ξένον
σώζειν οἷας τε καὶ μόνας ἀρκεῖν ἔχειν;
κἄμοιγε ποῦ ταῦτ' ἐστὶν, οὔτινες βάθρων
ἐκ τῶνδ' ἐξάραντες εἰτ' ἐλαύνετε,
ὄνομα μόνον δέισαντες; οὐ γὰρ δὴ τό γε
σῶμ' οὐδὲ τάργα τᾶμ'. ἐπεὶ τὰ γ' ἔργα μου
πεπονθίτ' ἐστὶ μᾶλλον ἢ δεδρακότα,
εἴ σοι τὰ μητρὸς καὶ πατρὸς χρεῖη λέγειν,
ὧν οὔνεκ' ἐκφοβεῖ με. τοῦτ' ἐγὼ καλῶς
ἔξοιδα.

Had we known nothing of *Œdipus* and his impendent doom, the rhetoric of this keen indignant invective would be felt in its fierce volubility and broken pauses—the alternation of verses wrought in monosyllables with verses of long billowy words—the compressed force of crasis and elision rapidly exchanged for the same verbal elements deployed with full syllabic emphasis.

I have observed that ponderosity is not the note of Greek eloquence. Yet two great poets, early in this literature, revealed the possibilities of a massive Greek style. These were Pindar and *Æschylus*. Pindar builds with blocks of words in the manner of Cyclopean masonry.

τὰς δὲ Θεοξένου ἀκτῖνας προσώπου μαρμαριζοίσας δρακίς
 ὅς μὴ πόθῳ κυμαίνεται, ἐξ ἀδάμαντος
 ἢ σιδάρου κεχάλκευται μέλαιναν καρδίαν
 ψυχρᾷ φλογί.

Carrying on this figure of architectural structure, we might point out that Pindar uses hardly any mortar; dispenses with the connecting particles, prepositions, expletives, in which Greek style is usually redundant; works by collocation of huge wedge-like phrases.

The massiveness of *Æschylus* assumes a different form. Aristophanes described that manner

in a passage of the "Frogs," which shows that Attic taste regarded it already as archaic :

ἔσται δ' ἵππολόφων τε λόγων κορυθαίολα νείκη,
 σχινδαλάμων τε παραξόνια, σμιλεύματά τ' ἔργων,
 φωτὸς ἀμυνομένου φρενοτέκτονος ἀνδρὸς
 ῥήμαθ' ἵπποβάμονα.
 φρίξας δ' αὐτοκόμου λοφίᾳς λασιαύχενα χαίταν,
 δεινὸν ἐπισκύνιον ξυνάγων βρυχώμενος ἥσει
 ῥήματα γομποπαγῇ, πινακηδὸν ἀποσπῶν
 γηγενεῖ φύσῃματι.

This pomp, as of heavy cavalry charging with plumes in air and plunging horses, this effort, as of a Titan tearing bolted planks asunder and snorting in his labour, mark the Æschylean style, when the poet gives a free rein to the impulse of his "mighty line :"

ἃ ἃ·
 δμωαὶ γυναῖκες, αἶδε Γοργόνων δίκην
 φαιοχίτωνες καὶ πεπλεκτανημένοι
 πυκνοῖς δράκουσιν.

Of such sort are the ponderous iambics, struggling beneath their Marathonian panoply :

ἀλλ' οὐ καρανιστῆρες ὀφθαλμώρυχοι.

Æschylus proves that Greek could be voluminous as well as voluble. But in his hands the style was not always pushed to the extreme of emphasis and exaggeration. Tragic solemnity of diction reaches the height of massive yet elastic

energy in Cassandra's prophetic speeches delivered at the gate of Agamemnon's palace. These are the sublimest examples of dramatic poetry bequeathed to us by antiquity. They are certainly unique in Greek literature for verbal weight combined with fiery movement.

The Athenians refused to follow the leading of either Pindar or Æschylus. The ironical, analytical, dialectical instinct of the people drew them aside to other issues. Just as sculpture, after emerging from archaic clumsiness, passed rapidly through the heroic beauty of Pheidias to the elegance and grace of Praxiteles—just as architecture refined upon the Doric column in the Parthenon, and introduced the slender Ionic type—so literary style grew lighter and more delicate as years advanced. The gravity of Sophocles has less of volume than the gravity of his great predecessor. These lines from the "Antigone" reveal the tragic manner at its purest, in its most characteristically Attic form :

οὐ γάρ τί μοι Ζεὺς ἦν ὁ κηρύξας τάδε
οὐδ' ἡ ξύνοικος τῶν κάτω θεῶν Δίκη·
οὐδὲ σθένειν τοσοῦτον ῥόμην τὰ σὰ
κηρύγμαθ' ὥστ' ἄγραπτα κἀσφαλῇ θεῶν
νόμῳ δύνασθαι θνητὸν ὄνθ' ὑπερδραμεῖν.
οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε κἀχθὲς, ἀλλ' αἰεί ποτε
ζῇ ταῦτα, κοῦδείς οἶδεν ἐξ ὅτου 'φάνη.

It is upon passages like these that Euripides seems to have formed his style; that limpid and

lucid flow of words, which is so sweet and musical, so plastic and so melancholy :

*τίς δ' οἶδεν, εἰ ζῆν τοῦθ', ὃ κέκληται θανεῖν,
τὸ ζῆν δὲ θνήσκειν ἐστί· πλὴν ὁμῶς βροτῶν
νοσοῦσιν οἱ βλέποντες, οἱ δ' ὀλωλότες
οὐδὲν νοσοῦσιν, οὐδὲ κέκτηνται κακά.*

The Greeks, especially the Attic Greeks, were a nation of talkers and public speakers. In the Lesché, the Agora, the Palæstra, the Pnyx, the Dikasterion, they carried on their intellectual life. Afterwards, they met again for discussion and colloquy at banquets and wine-parties. These habits affected their prose style, which was apt to be declamatory and conversational—rarely meditative. It is never impressive by profound suggestions. It lacks mystery—the mystery of brooding and indwelling thought. We cannot mention a Greek of the good period, who wrote as though he were writing for himself and truth, without relation to an audience. The histories of Herodotus and Thucydides were planned for recitation. The philosophical works of the Socratic school assumed the form of dialogue. Prose, under these conditions, failed to attain the perfection which might have been expected from the language and the genius of the race. It displayed weaknesses inherent in the flexibility of the Greek speech, and in the sociability of those who used it. Fluid, glittering, versatile, attractive—anything

but sternly earnest, heart-felt, monumental—Attic prose forecasts the advent of the *Græculus esuriens*. Even the golden periods of Plato suffer from loquacity, a twittering reiteration of γὰρ and γοῦν and μέν and δέ, a conversational expansiveness, a superfluous use of expletives, a disproportion between the thing said and the way of saying it. Much may be conceded to Plato's dramatic aim, and no man of taste would wish for alteration in the diction of such masterpieces as the "Republic," the "Symposium," and the "Phædrus." As specimens of a peculiar kind of literary art, they are unassailable, preserving with peculiar felicity the very form and pressure of the times they represent. Still, they reveal an element of weakness in the juvenile Greek language—its talkative facility, its want of massy weight and pregnant suggestiveness. This defect through them becomes the more apparent, because they are the supreme examples of the quality in style to which Greek prose aspired.

Aristotle was far less gifted as a stylist than his master. In his hands Greek prose lost its charm of adolescent beauty. At the same time it ceased to be garrulous. By his method of scientific analysis and by his coinage of technical terms, Aristotle exercised more influence over the language of philosophy than Plato did; and, when he passed away, the genius of the race had already lost its fresh, creative faculty. The Greeks continued for centuries

to display inexhaustible fertility in the manipulation of their plastic speech to suit the subtlest shades of thought. This power gave them an empire over the creeds, the logic, the diurnal diction of Christendom. But they could not produce a prose style worthy of Hellas. I will not except the orators from this criticism. Wonderful as are the burning floods of eloquence in Demosthenes, the long-wrought periods conducted to a fiery close, the march of his phalanxed arguments, the pungent sting of his sarcasm, and the sublimity of his appeals to human or to patriotic feeling, Demosthenes did not found a solid prose style. The study of rhetoric, when it left the bema for the academy, encouraged the worst vices of Attic literature. It diverted attention from matter to manner, and ended in the wire-drawn conceits of the later sophists.

When we reflect upon Greek style, we return to Homer's phrase: *ἔπεα πτερόεντα*. The words of the language were too winged—too swift, perchance, for poetry of the severest order—too light and feathered for the purposes of monumental prose.

III.

The passage from Greek to Latin is like passing from a paradise of flowers and fruit-trees to a region of tilth and pasture, from the boyhood of demigods to the adult manhood of heroic mortals.

Language has advanced further from its primitive exuberance. Latin has no dual, no aorist, no middle voice, no verbs in μ . It is deficient in the otiose particles which made the Greek speech garrulous, retaining only such conjunctions and prepositions as are strictly needful for the logical coherence of sentences. It has dropped the definite article, which contributes so much to the lightness of Greek. No language of the same family is more parsimonious than Latin in the means employed for utterance. None relies for its rhetorical and logical effect more boldly upon the declension of nouns and participles, the inflection of verbs, and the collocation of vocables. Greek superfluities have disappeared; the auxiliaries of modern languages have only partially begun to sprout. Economy is exhibited in every element of this athletic tongue. Like a naked gladiator, all bone and muscle, it relies upon bare sinewy strength. Having preserved genders, Latin is able to dispense with the indefinite article, trusting to the cadence of nouns, adjectives, and participles for the structure of its propositions. Since pronouns are not demanded as subjects of the Latin verb, the appearance of them becomes rhetorically emphatic:

Multis *ille* bonis flebilis occidit. . . .

Tempora mutantur *nos* et mutamur in illis.

As a consequence of these peculiarities, Latin is the

monumental language, the language of lapidary inscription, of proverb and of epigram, of terse sentences and legal edicts. It is also the oratorical language, abounding in sonorous words of *ositas* and *atio*, and long reverberating verbs in the subjunctive mood. The consonants are more closely packed and carry greater weight than in the Greek; still the vowel sounds are deep, open, and plentifully distributed. It would be difficult to match the following line for opulence in any other literature :

Spargens humida mella soporiferumque papaver.

The Greek, as we have learned from Pindar, could do much by massive building, by the juxtaposition of words in blocks; but Latin could do more. There is a pregnancy of rhetoric in the antithesis of verb and noun which only Latin properly developed. Without loss of dignity, sentences can be constructed in this language which carry the packed meaning of logogriphs :

Stat crux dum volvitur orbis.

Latin is not voluble, and rarely rapid; yet a master can make it run in liquid numbers, with a slumberous or a melancholy flow, as of some soft-sliding stream :

*Inter arundineas comas gravidumque papaver,
Et tacitos sine labe lacus sine murmure rivos.*

The use of *que*, and the force gained by the omission of the pronoun, are beautifully illustrated by the following example :

Tempora labuntur tacitisque senescimus annis.

In English the pathos of the line would have to be impaired by the weakness of a separate *and*, and the necessary introduction of the short word *we*. The most felicitous renderings of memorable Latin lines into English reveal the superiority of the classical language in qualities of monumental repose. Virgil wrote :

Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

The Roman obtained his effect of lapsing waters by simple quantities of sound. Dryden translates the verse—and it is one of his triumphs of metaphrase—thus :

He flows, and, as he flows, for ever will flow on.

The Briton substitutes for pure sound-quantity the hurry of monosyllables, and appeals to the intellectual imagination rather than the verbal sense. Some rhetorical strokes in Latin can be reproduced in no other language. Try as we may, we shall not render the force of such a line as this :

Intolerabilius nihil est quam femina dives—

where the passion of the speaker is symbolised

in the first emphatic long word, and the sting of his satire is conveyed by the clinching spondee at its close.

In the noble blending of long words with short, the rejection of superfluities, and the dependence upon verbal collocation for the expression of logical meaning, Latin is unrivalled among languages. Whatever Greek could do (and Greek did many things beyond the scope of Latin), no Greek poet, except Sappho, produced stanzas of the same stationary and yet moving dignity as these :

Atqui sciebat quæ sibi barbarus
Tortor pararet : non aliter tamen
Dimovit obstantes propinquos
Et populum reditus morantem,
Quam si clientum longa negotia,
Dijudicata lite, relinqueret,
Tendens Venafranos in agros
Aut Lacedæmonium Tarentum.

The foregoing paragraphs betray no slender admiration for the Latin language as an organ of style. If I may introduce a personal confession, it is to this effect: that in proportion as I have grown in years and in reflection on the art of writing—passing away from youth, and soberly testing enthusiasms awakened by first contact with the divine Greek imagination—I have grown to appreciate with deeper reverence the austere and masculine virtues of Latin, the sincerity and brevity

of Roman speech, the nervous grip with which that language grasps thought, and the pomp of more than Oriental draperies with which its eloquence envelops it, when the haughty genius of the race condescends to ornament and methods of rhetorical persuasion.

It is not, in the case of Latin, that sweetness distils from strength, like honey from the famous jaws of Samson's lion. There is little enough of pure sweetness in that literature. What sugared drops we find are scarcely native to the soil, but stolen from the hives of subtle Hellas. I would rather say that in the clanging periods of Roman eloquence, in the solemn march of Livy's historical narration, in the stabbing epigrams of Tacitus, in the swollen torrent-cry of Juvenal's invective, in the oceanic ebb and flow of Lucretian hexameters, the stubborn nudity of Latin clothes itself with gorgeous paludaments, which it wears like a conqueror, and trails in the dust of the imperial city like a general on his path to Capitolian Jove. That investiture of naked strength with studied oratorical magnificence is the supreme achievement of the Roman genius in style. And the indifference with which the trappings of purple and of gold are carried, the brutality of the underlying thought, the solid concrete of the road on which the triumphal chariots travel, add to the impressiveness of this majestic Roman manner.

The ruins of the Parthenon are unapproachable in loveliness, crowning the sacred hill on which a virgin goddess in the world's young prime descended. They enchant us with a revelation of divine harmony and immortal beauty. The ruins of the Pont du Gard, bridging the broad valley of the Gardon, uplifted high in air, with no charm of form, no appeal to the æsthetic sense, conceding nothing to nature and claiming nothing from environment ; these Roman ruins enthrall the imagination with a different but not less potent magic.

We cannot surmise what Latin literature might have produced if it had not submitted to Greek models. The religion of the Romans shows them to have been deficient in the first constituent of national poetry, an imaginative mythology. We are, therefore, so far justified in believing that the assimilative instinct of their artists was a right one. Yet how firmly did the Roman spirit grasp whatever things it touched !

*Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra,
Credo equidem vivos ducent de marmore vultus ;
Orabunt causas melius, coelique meatus
Describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent :
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento ;
Hæ tibi erunt artes : pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.*

The poet who in proud humility and candid sense of fact uttered these words of condescending

withdrawal from the lesser fields of empire, exercised a lordlier influence over the last nineteen centuries of civilisation than any poet of the Greeks did; and the language used by Virgil passed into the mother-speech of modern nations, and controlled their style in its formation.

Latin had the defects of its qualities, and these were very different from those of Greek literature in the decadence. It remained rigid, unpliant, stubbornly representative of a warlike and administrative race, in spite of the polish added by its Hellenistic artists. The chief difficulty with which this language had to contend was its intellectual inflexibility, its impermeability, its resistance to ideas. The Greek vocabulary proved itself adequate to every step in speculative thought. It clothed the figments of metaphysic, as it had clothed the fancies of mythology, with specious forms, all plastic and all beautiful. We have therefore perhaps to be thankful that the books of the New Testament and the theology of the first Christian centuries were entrusted to the waning genius of Hellas. Catholic dogma might have been more jejune and sterile than it is, had it been first handled by Romans instead of Hellenists. As it was, the ruthlessness of Latin exposed the plausibility of Greek, whenever the two languages were brought into close contact. But Christianity became the Empire's creed. The Roman genius, born to

rule and bent on ruling, adopted and gave world-currency to metaphysical ideas which were but inadequately represented in the Latin speech.

IV.

What the Latin Church had undertaken, and what the Latin tongue was destined to perform during the years which preceded and the centuries which followed the dissolution of the Empire, can only be understood by tracing the development of the language under these altered conditions.

The date 395 A.D. marks one of the most important epochs in world-history. In this year the Emperor Theodosius died, and the Roman realm was finally divided into Eastern and Western. After the lapse of less than a century, the share which fell to his second son Honorius, Cæsar of the West, devolved upon barbarian chiefs, never again to be reunited with the patrimony of his elder son Arcadius. In the year 395, the three builders-up of Latin Christianity, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, were still alive. Augustine, the youngest, had recently been consecrated Bishop of Hippo. Jerome was finishing his translation of the Bible in a monastery at Bethlehem. Ambrose, the great Archbishop of Milan, who, five years earlier, repulsed Theodosius from the doors of his cathedral, reminding the lord of the terra-queous globe that Christ was above Cæsar, had

two more years to live. These three men are justly revered as fathers and founders of Latin Christendom. Their work was destined to endure for better or for worse, deepening and defining that intellectual separation of West from East, of Roman from Byzantine ways of thought, which showed itself politically in the partition of the Empire between the two heirs of Theodosius.

Thus no period of time was more pregnant for the future of the Occidental races than the close of the fourth century after Christ. The waning lights of paganism mingle with the waxing lights of Christendom. Classical civility comes to an end; the stuff of the modern world is prepared by the intrusion of barbaric tribes and northern hordes into the comity of nations. Claudian, the last pagan poet of the classical type, celebrates the apotheosis of Christian Theodosius in voluble hexameters. Ambrose, at the same moment, invents hymns for the Church at Milan in rhythms which already demand rhyme, and need only the addition of rhyme to be mediæval. "*Quantum fleui in hymnis et canticis ecclesiæ tuæ!*" writes Augustine of these sacred songs, with a touch of emotion which is wholly modern. Jerome, adapting the Latin tongue to Oriental thought and imagery, creates a new instrument of verbal utterance in the prose of the Vulgate.

The Vulgate is undoubtedly the chief monument of the mental transformation I am tracing. This resurrection of a new organ of style—for we can hardly call it less—from the grave where Cicero and Tacitus and Livy lay embalmed, is one of the most singular phenomena in history. Too little attention has hitherto been paid to the extraordinary plasticity of Latin in the decline of antique civilisation. Responding to altered spiritual conditions, Jerome clad the Roman strength of speech with Asiatic pomp, bent its imperial stiffness to Greek subtlety, drew from its iron chords the melodies of Syrian lyres and harping hallelujahs of apocalyptic ecstasy. At the moment when classical style was expiring in the conceits and reminiscences of poets like Ausonius, a fresh and varied style appeared, adapted in its elasticity and plangent music to the utterance of modern emotion. And while the instrument of prose was being reconstructed thus, metre discarded quantity for accent, invented new rhythms and new stanzas, adopted the ornament of rhyme.

The Vulgate is so all-important in this change of national style, which prepared the Latin language to be the cosmopolitan vehicle of expression in Europe during the next nine hundred years, that I may be pardoned for exhibiting its prose by illustrations. With any passage of Cicero, or

Livy, or Quintilian, in our minds, let us read the following extracts :

Post hæc aperuit Job os suum, et maledixit diei suo, et locutus est.

Pereat dies in qua natus sum, et nox in qua dictum est : conceptus est homo.

Dies ille vertatur in tenebras, non requirat eum Deus desuper, et non illustretur lumine.

Obscurent eum tenebræ et umbra mortis, occupet eum caligo, et involvatur amaritudine.

Noctem illam tenebrosus turbo possideat, non computentur in diebus annis, nec numereatur in mensibus.

Sit nox illa solitaria, nec laude digna :

maledicant ei qui maledicunt diei, qui parati sunt suscitare leviathan :

Obtenebrentur stellæ caligine ejus : expectet lucem et non videat, nec ortum surgentis auroræ :

Quia non conclusit ostia ventris qui portavit me, non abstulit mala ab oculis meis.

Quare non in vulva mortuus sum, egressus ex utero non statim perii ?

Quare exceptus genibus ? Cur lactatus uberibus ?

Nunc enim dormiens silerem, et somno meo requiescerem :

Cum regibus et consulibus terræ, qui ædificant sibi solitudines :

Aut cum principibus, qui possident aurum et replent domos suas argento :

Aut sicut abortivum absconditum non subsisterem, vel qui concepti non viderunt lucem.

Ibi impii cessaverunt a tumultu, et ibi requiescunt fessi robore.

Like the chords of penitential psalms, chanted by male voices in the gloom of cathedral choirs,

the deep reverberations of these weighty Latin words go rolling through the cavernous aisles of the mysterious mediæval period.

Veni de Libano sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni : Coronaberis de capite Amana, de vertice Sani et Hermon, de cubilibus leonum, de montibus pardorum.

Vulnerasti cor meum soror mea sponsa, vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum et in uno crine colli tui.

Quam pulchræ sunt mammæ tuæ soror mea sponsa ! pulchriora sunt ubera tua vino, et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata.

Favus distillans labia tua sponsa, mel et lac sub lingua tua : et odor vestimentorum tuorum sicut odor thuris.

Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus.

Emissiones tuæ paradisi malorum puniceorum cum pomorum fructibus. Cypri cum nardo ;

Nardus et crocus, fistula et cinnamoni cum universis lignis Libani, myrrha et aloë cum omnibus primis unguentis.

Fons hortorum : puteus aquarum viventium, quæ fluunt impetu de Libano.

Surge aquilo, et veni auster, perfle hortum meum, et fluant aromatata illius.

Like the breaking of an alabaster box of precious ointment, like the tossing up of heavy-perfumed censers ; so the penetrating odours of this prose, artless in style, oppressive in passionate suggestion, float abroad through all the convents and the churches of the centuries to come, laden with languors of mystic love, pregnant with poetry undreamed of on the banks of the Tiber or Ilissus.

The Latin of the Canticles aspires toward music, and will exhale in sound when Palestrina wakes the master art of modern times.

Una enim catena tenebrarum omnes erant colligati. Sive spiritus sibilans, aut inter spissos arborum ramos avium sonus suavis, aut vis aquæ decurrentis nimium,

Aut sonus validus præcipitatarum petrarum, aut ludentium animalium cursus invisus, aut mugientium valida bestiarum vox, aut resonans de altissimis montibus echo: deficientes faciebant illos præ timore.

Omnis enim orbis terrarum limpido illuminabatur lumine, et non impeditus operibus continebatur.

Solis autem illis superposita erat gravis nox, imago tenebrarum, quæ superventura illis erat. Ipsi ergo sibi erant graviores tenebris.

Like the darkness of the Dark Ages—the darkness which deepened until the pulse of human life well-nigh stopped, and men sat still with indrawn breath, waiting for the midnight bell to toll the advent of the year of doom—these groaning Latin sentences diffuse a sinister obscurity, and symbolise the gloom in which the nations walked, while “the whole world shined with clear light, and none were hindered in their labour,” but the minds of men wore night around them, and terrified their souls with self-created shadows.

What strikes us most in this new style is the dissolution of the previous periodic structure of sentences, and the addition of a hitherto unapprehended colour-value to the rich sonority of

ample Latin verbs and nouns. Writers of hymns in rhyme presently availed themselves of these peculiarities. The noble blending of long and short words, which we noticed in a quotation from Horace, now came to be employed with different purpose. It gave singular majesty to the religious emotion of stanzas like the following :

Dum me mori est necesse,
Noli mihi tunc deesse :
In tremenda mortis hora
Veni Jesu absque mora ;
Tuere me et libera.
Cum me jubes emigrare,
Jesu care tunc appare ;
O amator amplectende,
Temet ipsum tunc ostende
In cruce salutifera.

We have travelled far away from Regulus. Is it possible that the language should be called the same ?

The Vulgate — the word of God divulged, translated from its Hebrew and its Greek into Latin for the common people of the Western world — what a success this book of Jerome's had, and how it modified and moulded all the silent centuries that made us what we are ! No other *vulgarisateur* has done a millionth part of what S. Jerome did. Luther, Tyndal, Diodati, the innumerable scribes of the Bible Society, have spread abroad the sacred writings of the Jewish

and the Christian Church. Into each nation where these versions penetrate, they bring a great and powerful tradition. Many of them, the earlier in each case, rank as monuments of style. Eleven centuries after the death of Jerome, two youthful nations, the English and the German, became vocal for the first time in vernacular translations of the Bible, and based the rules of written language on their precedents. But what was this in comparison with Jerome's work? His Bible scattered and displaced the classics, erased the memories of Rome and insolent Greece, undid Olympus, brought the wrecks of the old world and the nebulous elements of the modern world, Celts, Teutons, Norsemen, Goths, and what not, into relation with the penetrative secrets of the Oriental mind, the potent metaphysic of the Greek.

There is a book, steeped in the style of the Vulgate, which possesses peculiar value as a link between the ancient and the modern world. I mean the "Confessions" of S. Augustine. Nothing like it had appeared before, so far as we have knowledge of antiquity. No self-revelation of a human soul had hitherto been made with such free confidence. Nowhere else could the same introspective analysis of doubts and motives and desires be found. Subjectivity had never spoken out so candidly, with less reserve, with less regard to artistic or

rhetorical effect. The distinguishing note of this book is that the author of it has found his true self in God, and pours his heart out to the God who understands him. In this respect, S. Augustine anticipates the movement of the modern world, and inaugurates a literature which only started into plenitude of being nine centuries after his death in the body. So tardy is the evolution of the human mind.

S. Augustine paints in his "Confessions" the entire life of his hybrid epoch: a pagan father and a Christian mother; the schools of African grammarians and Italian rhetoricians; the baths; the Carthaginian circus stained with blood, the lawless lives of Roman cities; the church at Milan and its perils, the origin of monastic societies and the first beginnings of ecclesiastical music; conversions to the Christian faith, baptisms, pagan honours paid to tombs of martyrs; Manichean, Pelagian, Neoplatonic, Arian heresies. We are introduced to men wavering between philosophy and faith, Athens and Jerusalem, uncertain which path to follow. We watch Latin Christianity in the making; and the man who relates all this is one who powerfully helped to fix its outlines. The "Confessions" paint the second half of the fourth century in the spirit and the manner of a modern artist. Their style possesses corresponding interest, because, although Augustine was himself a celebrated professor of rhetoric, his

diction is anything but classical. We find no trace of that laborious attempt to reproduce the phrases and recapture the rhythms of past literature, which marks the poetry of Claudian and Ausonius. Augustine speaks in the new language, the Latin which was moulding itself on Christian lines of thought for modern uses.

The famous passage which describes Augustine's passion of sorrow upon the death of a dearly beloved friend might be chosen as an adequate example of this new style :

Quo dolore contenebratum est cor meum ; et quicquid adspiciebam, mors erat. Et erat mihi supplicium, et paterna domus mira infelicitas ; et quicquid cum illo communicaveram, sine illo in cruciatum immanem verterat. Expetebant eum undique oculi mei, et non dabatur mihi ; et oderam omnia, quia non haberent eum ; nec mihi jam dicere poterant : ecce veniet, sicut cum viveret, quando absens erat. Factus eram ipse mihi magna quæstio, et interrogabam animam meam quare tristis esset, et quare conturbaret me valde ; et nihil noverat respondere mihi. Et si dicebam : spera in Deum, juste non obtemperabat ; quia verior erat et melior homo, quem carissemum amiserat, quam phantasma, in quod sperare jubebatur. Solus fletus erat dulcis mihi, et successerat amico meo in deliciis animi mei.—Et nunc, Domine, jam illa transierunt, et tempore lenitum est vulnus meum.

It would be delightful to linger in quotations over the plangent melody of S. Augustine's prose, so resonant with the modern cry of emotion :

Quo vobis adhuc et adhuc ambulare vias difficiles et laboriosas ? Non est requies, ubi quæritis eam. Quærite quod quæritis ;

sed ibi non est, ubi quæritis. Beatam vitam quæritis in regione mortis : non est illic.

But enough has been cited to indicate the style of the "Confessions." This style fell, like every form of culture, into decay during the Middle Ages. But when the Revival of Learning began, it was not so much from Cicero as from Augustine that the founder of humanism drew inspiration and borrowed his manner. Petrarch adored Cicero, but he loved and felt at home with Augustine. To Augustine, as to a bosom friend, he confided the troubles of his own heart in the dialogues entitled "Secretum." The "Confessions" were for him *scaturientes lachrymis Confessionum libri*—pages running over with the fount of tears. When he climbed the Mont Ventoux with his brother Gherardo in 1336, this book was in his pocket. Lying there, with the Alps outstretched before him and the Rhone majestically sweeping toward the sea, he drew it forth, and by an accident similar to that which happened to Augustine with Alypius in their garden at Milan, his eyes chanced to fall upon this suggestive passage :

Et eunt homines admirari alta montium et ingentes fluctus maris, et latissimos lapsus fluminum, et oceani ambitum, et gyros siderum, et relinquunt se ipsos.

And men go abroad to gaze with wonder at the heights of mountains and the mighty billows of the deep, and the lordly width of rivers flowing down, and the circuit of ocean, and the revolutions of the stars, and leave themselves unheeded.

Few things are more touching in the history of literature than this spiritual comradeship—Petrarch clasping hands with Augustine across the Lethe of nine mediæval centuries; the last man of the classic age and the first man of the modern mingling their souls in sympathy of sentiment.

v.

Latin detains the analyst of national style, not without reason, seeing that this language is the parent of so many modern tongues and the mistress of all modern literature.

Italian might be regarded as a prolongation of Latin into a third period of existence. It retains some of the Roman qualities. Dante could write :

Dopo la dolorosa rotta quando
Carlo Magno perdè la santa gesta,
Non sonò sì terribilmente Orlando.

Tasso made lines of sounding vocables like this :

Immense solitudini d' arena.

Machiavelli used a pen of steel, writing with a compressed energy and simple regard for perspicuity which was worthy of an Augustan.

Monumental strength is not, however, the specific quality of the Italian language, and has rarely been aimed at by Italian writers. The abundance of definite and indefinite articles, the

conjugation of verbs by auxiliaries, the frequency of terminations in *essere*, *ebbero*, *ossono*, give a languor and indecision to the style. Italian loiters and seems to hesitate. Its characteristic is not rapidity, not robustness. The beauty of liquid numbers and sonorous vowel-sounds makes it the language of melody, and gives to the best Italian rhythms the charm of a sustained *cantilena*.

I observed above, that the languages which exhibit the highest capacity for style are those which combine loyalty to their native traditions with plasticity, becoming with each successive phase of culture more perfect instruments for the expression of those ideas which are gradually introduced into the common stock of civilisation. Now this is what the Italian language has hitherto missed. Italian writers have failed to cultivate the language on its plastic side, and to keep it duly open to the influx of ideas. The result is that Italian, in spite of its fine quality and classic finish, does not take a very high rank as an organ of style.

This is due to accidents of growth, which find no exact parallel in the history of any other nation. Long before French attained to fixity, and while English was lisping in the cradle, Italian produced a monumental poem, the "Divine Comedy." Then followed Petrarch and Boccaccio, giving exquisite form, in verse and prose, to the vernacular of

mediæval Tuscany. The Revival of Learning directed attention to antique masterpieces, and interrupted the natural development of the mother tongue. When poets like Poliziano and Ariosto, prose idyllists like Sannazzaro, men of letters like Bembo, historians like Machiavelli and Guicciardini, resumed Italian for the serious work of literature, the spirit of the age already turned to criticism. Dialects flourished in every province, and humanism supplied the common culture of the nation. It was thought necessary to imitate the Tuscan classics—Petrarch for verse and Boccaccio for prose—in order to obtain one type of style for the scattered members of the Italian family. Thus, writers who aimed at correctness began already to look backward at a time when the intellectual conditions of Europe demanded a free forward movement. After the close of the sixteenth century Italian literature was either scholarly, jejune, stiff, and empty of ideas, because it followed models which were out of harmony with the advance of modern thought; or it was capricious, fantastic, and *barocco*, because it tried to innovate within the same narrow sphere of style.

Only men of the highest natural endowments could move freely and express contemporary thought and feeling in diction which had been so artificially and critically elaborated. At the

beginning of this century Leopardi handled his mother tongue in verse and prose with greater mastery than any other writer of that age. It may therefore be well to select passages from his works which illustrate this classic style in its perfection.

Più volte io mi maraviglio meco medesimo come, ponghiamo caso, Virgilio, esempio supremo di perfezione agli scrittori, sia venuto e mantengasi in questa sommità di gloria. Perocchè, quantunque io presuma poco di me stesso, e creda non poter mai godere e conoscere ciascheduna parte d' ogni suo pregio e d' ogni suo magistero ; tuttavia tengo per certo che il massimo numero de' suoi lettori e lodatori non iscorge ne' poemi suoi più che una bellezza per ogni dieci o venti che a me, con molto rileggerli e meditarli, viene pur fatto di scoprirvi. In vero io mi persuado che l' altezza della stima e della riverenza verso gli scrittori sommi, provenga comunemente, in quelli eziandio che li leggono e trattano, piuttosto da consuetudine ciecamente abbracciata, che da giudizio proprio e dal conoscere in quelli per veruna guisa un merito tale.

It is impossible to overrate the art displayed in the construction of this paragraph—the ease with which the periods are kept in hand, the balance of the clauses, and the harmony of the cadences. Yet we are left with an impression of cumbrous labour and circumlocution. The style seems stationary, as though it could with difficulty be made to move along. The thought is inadequate to the verbal machinery which has been set going for its utterance.

In poetry the case is different :

Che fai tu, luna, in ciel ? dimmi, che fai,
 Silenziosa luna ?
 Sorgi la sera, e vai
 Contemplando i deserti ; indi ti posi.
 Ancor non sei tu paga
 Di rïandare i sempiterni calli ?
 Ancor non prendi a schivo, ancor sei vaga
 Di mirar queste valli ?

There we have the supreme beauty of Italian verse—the sustained *cantilena* of words which naturally sing and fall into apparently inevitable rhythm. The poet seems to be merely speaking. But the music is so clear, the movement of the lines of varying length is so majestic, the thought is so perspicuous, that we seek no higher satisfaction of the intellectual senses.

This noble manner of Leopardi could not lend itself to light or rapid effects. It remains meditative, and culminates in passages like the following, which describes the poet's thoughts at night beneath the stars upon the lava of Vesuvius :

Sovente in queste piagge,
 Che, desolate, a bruno
 Veste il flutto indurato, e par che ondeggi,
 Seggo la notte ; e su la mesta landa
 In purissimo azzurro
 Veggo dall' alto fiammeggiar le stelle,
 Cui di lontan fa specchio
 Il mare, e tutto di scintille in giro
 Per lo voto seren brillare il mondo.

E poi che gli occhi a quelle luci appunto,
Ch' a lor sembrano un punto,
E sono immense in guisa
Che un punto a petto a lor son terra e mare
Veracemente ; a cui
L' uomo non pur, ma questo
Globo ove l' uomo è nulla,
Sconosciuto è del tutto : e quando miro
Quegli ancor più senz' alcun fin remoti
Nodi quasi di stelle,
Ch' a noi paion qual nebbia, a cui non l' uomo
E non la terra sol, ma tutte in uno,
Del numero infinite e della mole,
Cor l' aureo sole insiem, le nostre stelle
O sono ignote, o così paion come
Essi alla terra, un punto
Di luce nebulosa ; al pensier mio
Che sembri allora, o prole
Dell' uomo ?

This winding labyrinth of words is brought to a conclusion, as regards both sense and sound, so logically and so naturally that we hardly pause to wonder at the art of style, the suspension of thought, required for the achievement. It seems like the unpremeditated utterance of a divine being whose habitual speech is melody. And there is good foundation for this first impression. If we reflect upon the poetry which men like Heine and Matthew Arnold have produced in their attempts at unrhymed verse of varying lengths, we shall perceive the incontestable superiority of Italian as a musical vehicle. The verbal artist cannot obtain similar

results with German, French, or English. Italian largely owes its quality to what it has retained of Latin structure and of Latin collocation.

There is another circumstance which must not be neglected in the general survey of the growth of Italian style. The nation was not only divided by dialects and united mainly by a common tendency toward humanistic culture. It was also for several centuries deprived of free political life, a central capital, and a press adequate to the intellectual requirements of an expansive people. Neither by public speaking, nor by the conversation of enlightened coteries, nor yet by journalism, had the Italian language proper opportunities for unfolding its capacities and marching front to front with modern thought. Almost suddenly, within our lifetime, these disabilities were removed; and no sooner could Italy proclaim herself in fact a nation, than the classic style, of which Leopardi was so great a nineteenth century master, began to be displaced by revolutionary modes of expression which cause pain to the purists, and which no sane critic of language can regard as final. The difficulty under which a mother-tongue, artificially and critically fashioned like Italian, suffers when it copes with ordinary affairs of modern life, is illustrated by the fabrication of feeble vocables like *panificio*, *birrificio*, *cottonificio*, and by newspaper

jargon, of which the following sentence from a police-court report is only a fair specimen :

Tosto avvenuto l' attentato la cameriera si è resa latitante e finora non si potè mettersi sulle tracce. L' ufficiale ieri stava molto male, tanto che vociferavasi fosse resa necessaria l' amputazione della mano.

With reference to the jingle of inharmonious and weakly phrases which are now invading the minor literature of Italy, I remember the late Duke of Sermoneta inveighing in my presence against the diction of the Chambers, its barbarous neologisms, its total want of taste, its violation of the genius of the language. "Why cannot they use the golden speech of the fourteenth century?" he asked. "Everything can be expressed in Italian of that epoch." Alas, I thought to myself, *tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur*. Style which sufficed the writer of the "Fioretti di San Francesco" will not grapple with the exigencies of an age of scientific discoveries and crumbling theologies and social and political revolutions.

VI.

French, being an analytical language, is encumbered with auxiliary verbs, prepositions, explanatory and supplementary conjunctions—"les auxiliaires *avoir* et *être*, le verbe *faire*, les conjonctions

encombrantes; toute cette pouillerie de notre prose française," as a French critic puts it. Compared with Italian, the vowel-sounds are poor, the volume and natural rhythm of the vocables mediocre. Compared with English, French lacks variety and compass. Compared with German, the vocabulary is limited; those concrete and suggestive words which give scope to the metaphysical imagination are wanting.

French might be described as the least endowed by nature of the European languages. It often happens, however, that when the soil is poor, industry and tillage succeed in raising finer crops than wave upon the fatter glebe of luckier neighbours. So the intelligent attention paid to style in France, the conscious and persistent cultivation of the language by refined thinkers, the usage of a society pervious to ideas, of a Court where dulness and grossness were accounted crimes, of academies devoted to the study of diction, of drawing-rooms in which piquancy of phrase gave point to conversation, of a capital electric with the brain-life of modern civility—this effort to attain perfection, carried on through centuries by an enlightened and exquisitely polished race, has rendered French unrivalled in certain of the very highest qualities of verbal utterance.

Style is not so much a matter of linguistic resources, as of the art and tact with which those

resources are husbanded for use. If the French are less liberally endowed than some of their neighbours, they have made more of the wealth at their disposal. Every word of their comparatively limited vocabulary has been vitalised, penetrated with suggestions, cut and polished like a diamond of many facets, imbued with psychological colour and association. The beauty of French style consists in the parsimony of the means employed, and the manifold variety produced by the manipulation of those means—the feeling for exact values whereby simple words are thrown into relief by juxtaposition and selection, the justice of perception which discovers the right phrase and sets it in precisely the right context, the strength which comes from reserve, and the flexibility which is due to unerring veracity of statement. In this way, some of the effects which might seem to have been denied to the French language—effects of picturesque and coloured description, effects of mystery, effects of aerial indistinctness and haunting sweetness—are just those in which it is at present unrivalled.

“*La nature de cette langue,*” says Guy de Maupassant, “*est d’être claire, logique et nerveuse.*” It is the language of logical precision, of lucidity and scientific accuracy, of intelligence, curiosity, criticism, propriety. “*Elle ne se laisse pas affaiblir, obscurcir ou corrompre.*” It is the language of

aphorism, of epigram, of definition, of psychological discrimination. Braced in the austere struggle after truth of utterance, purged by the pursuit of exactitude, taught to be satisfied with veracity of phrase, there is nothing subtle in thought or evanescent in sentiment which escapes the grasp of its fine nervous organ of expression.

This makes French the perfect instrument of prose; not of sublime poetry, for that demands qualities which the language has failed to develop; not, peradventure, of the noblest oratory, for that requires a density and volume incompatible with the transparency specific to French ways of thinking; but of written prose, inexhaustible in crisp variety of rhythm and elasticity of phrase, never unmindful of the laws which separate prose from metrical utterance.

“Cet art de la Prose française,” exclaims Paul Bourget, in a passage from which I have already quoted, “héritage magnifique de la grande civilisation romaine. Le jour où cet art disparaîtrait, la conscience française serait bien malade, car dans l'ordre de l'intelligence elle aurait perdu sa plus indiscutable suprématie. Les langues se parlent sur toute la surface du monde; il est probable qu'il ne s'écrit qu'une seule prose, si l'on prend le mot dans le sens lapidaire et définitif où pouvait l'entendre un Tite-Live ou un Salluste; cette prose, c'est la nôtre. Inférieurs dans la poésie aux subtils

et divins poètes Anglais, initiés à la musique par les maîtres allemands, et aux arts plastiques par nos voisins du midi, nous sommes les rois absolus de cette forme de la Phrase Écrite."

There is little to gainsay in this enthusiastic, yet carefully measured, vindication by a French writer of his nation's claim to supremacy. Tardily, perhaps, yet definitely, we English people have come to acknowledge our own inferiority *in the art of prose*, and the necessity we are under of learning the rules of that art from French masters.

When we proceed to consider style as a branch of rhetoric, it will be apparent what the phrase italicised above implies. For the present, I wish to invite comparison between a passage from M. Renan's translation of the Book of Job and the already quoted Latin of the Vulgate :

Que ne suis-je mort dès le sein de ma mère,
Au sortir de ses entrailles, que n'expirai-je !
Pourquoi deux genoux sont-ils venus me recevoir,
Et deux seins m'inviter à les sucer ?
Maintenant je serais couché, je me reposerais,
Je dormirais dans une paix profonde,
Avec les rois et les grands de la terre,
Qui se bâtissent des mausolées,
Avec les princes qui possèdent l'or,
Et remplissent leur maison d'argent ;
Ou bien, comme l'avorton caché, je n'existerais pas,
Comme les enfans qui n'ont pas vu la lumière.
Là les méchants cessent leurs violences,
Là se repose l'homme épuisé.

This illustrates the limpidity and clearness of French style, its grace of simple outline; but it also illustrates the want of majesty, the sacrifice of grandeur, which we notice in the French language when it competes with one more sombre and poetical. "Quelle joie pour Jacob, quelle allégresse pour Israël," in the French version of the Psalms, contrasts but poorly with our own, "Then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad."

VII.

There is little in common between the languages of which we have been thinking and German—their Teutonic cousin in the Aryan family. The complicated syntax of German and its extraordinary richness render this language unrivalled for the disengagement and articulation of the minutest shades of thought. If natural resources and capacity for expression were sufficient to constitute style, then German literature ought to rank first among the literatures of Europe; but the exact opposite is the fact. Like the Roman Commonwealth, in Livy's famous phrase, the German language "*magnitudine laborat sua*," it flounders in its own voluminousness. That it is both difficult and clumsy — *schwierig und schwerfällig* — even Germans, if they are candid, admit. Foreigners know, to their cost, that the perusal of an ordinary book of German erudition demands thrice the time

and twice the expenditure of brain-force which are required by a French treatise. This is partly due to the genius and history of the language, which, until quite recently, has had no pains bestowed upon its style. But it is even more the fault of German writers, who seem, as a rule, culpably indifferent to propriety and beauty of expression. Abandoning themselves to the facility of their native speech, revelling in its exuberance, abusing its plasticity, inventing neologisms, importing foreign phrases wholesale, they scribble without giving a thought to the art of diction, and apparently without caring for precision in their ideas. Whatever comes to the pen-point is put down on paper. If one cumbrous sentence fails to hit the mark, instead of blotting and remodelling, they produce a second and a third to modify the imperfect impression. The result is that serious thinkers are content to put forth simple thoughts in jargon like the following :

Es bleibt uns deshalb nichts übrig als den Begriff der Kunst so zu sagen lemmatisch aufzunehmen, was bei allen besonderen philosophischen Wissenschaften, wenn sie vereinzelt betrachtet werden sollen, der Fall ist. Denn erst die gesammte Philosophie ist die Erkenntniss des Universums als in sich eine organische Totalität, die sich aus ihrem eigenen Begriffe entwickelt, und in ihrer sich zu sich verhaltenden Nothwendigkeit zum Ganzen in sich zurückgebend, sich mit sich als eine Welt der Wahrheit zusammenschliesst. In der Krone dieser wissenschaftlichen Nothwendigkeit ist jeder einzelne Theil ebensosehr

einer Seits ein in sich zurückkehrender Kreis, als er anderer Seits zugleich einen nothwendigen Zusammenhang mit anderen Gebieten hat, ein Rückwärts, aus dem er sich herleitet, wie ein Vorwärts, zu dem er selbst in sich sich weiter treibt, insofern er fruchtbar Anderes wieder aus sich erzeugt und für die wissenschaftliche Erkenntniss hervorgehen lässt.

This passage could not be translated literally into French; and the fact that it is incapable of conversion into style of absolute veracity justifies our entertaining grave doubts as to the soundness of its sense. When we succeed in grasping the meaning, however, we find that it conveys a not very original remark upon the relation of the subordinate branches of philosophy to science in general, which might have been briefly and modestly set forth. But to have expressed this notion with French lucidity would have shorn the writer's thought of its hazy impressiveness. The verbiage of Hegel adds a kind of mystic grandeur, what the Greeks called *σεμνοτήs*, to commonplace ideas enough; and his reckless abuse of the inexhaustible resources of the German language invests the cobwebs of the speculative fancy with something like a mythological concreteness.

The great strength of German lies in the unparalleled compass and wealth of its vocabulary. There is nothing which cannot be expressed in German by a native word, homely, picturesque, appealing straight to the intelligence alike of

learned and unlearned. The phraseology of abstract thought is concrete here ; it is also of native growth, not imported from the Greek or Latin. Instead of *incarnation*, Germans speak of *Fleischwerden* or *Verfleischung*. Instead of *relation*, *definition*, they use *Verhältniss*, *Bestimmung* ; instead of *concept*, *Begriff*. Some of their philosophical expressions, such for instance as *Weltanschauung*, display an inimitable aptitude. Even the terms of physical science are not remote from common life. *Schwefel-säure* explains itself more easily than *Acidus Sulphuricus*.

Abstract disquisitions retain a vividness and picturesqueness in German, which they never had in any other literature but the Greek. We have, perhaps, to thank this quality of the language—what may be called the mythopoeic energy of its vocabulary—for the cloud-castle-realm of German metaphysics. Ideas and distinctions which have no sound basis in fact, and which are incapable of being expressed in a less imaginative speech, obtain a specious aspect of reality and impose upon the mind when clothed with phraseology so vital and so concrete.

The same verbal privileges render German an admirable vehicle for literal translation. Few turns of phrase and few metrical effects are incapable of imitation in this language. The native genius of the tongue, however, is so alien to classic literature,

that its ingenious versions from Greek and Latin have the appearance of rough plaster-casts, rather than of reproductions in some precious material. It is in dealing with the masterpieces of a cognate literature, with Shakespeare's plays for example, that the inexhaustible riches of the mother-speech of Germany are best exhibited.

Considering the compass of German vocabulary and the plasticity of the language as an instrument of style, it is greatly to be deplored that average German writers are so slovenly in the construction of their sentences, and so indolent in their adoption of foreign and inharmonious elements.* Carelessness, want of taste and tact, insensibility to form, contempt for the genius and specific beauty of the native idiom, seem to be ingrained vices of this literature. When we reflect on what good German style might be—what it has been in the hands of men like Heine, Schopenhauer, Helmholtz—it is

* I ran through two numbers of a local German newspaper the other day, and noted the following barbarisms: Konstatiren, konveniren, passiren, prosperiren, kompromettiren, blamiren, prämiriren, projektiren, reformiren, publiziren, korrigiren, patronisen, kulmirinen, kursiren, präsidiren, Debatte, Diskussion, Direktion, Hotelier, Instruktor, Referat, Konkurrenz, Aktionär, Fraktionen, interessant, respektabel, Konzessionär, Varianten, eventuell, konstant, seriös, Stationen, Accord, Tapet, Billet, splendid, Details, Honneurs. Some phrases were peculiarly offensive, as these: Diese auffällige Coincidenz, diese theatercoup mässige Inszenirung; Emission der Aktien; hindurchpilotirtes Projekt; Kompetentester; plausibeln Rentabilitätsberechnungen.

really irritating not to be able to take up a book without at once stumbling upon uglinesses like the following :

Bei einer intelligenten, sehr suggestiblen Wärterin wirkten die Suggestions à échéance so mächtig, dass sie mir erklärte, sie sei absolut überwältigt und wäre gezwungen, sogar einen Mord zu begehen, wenn ich ihr denselben suggeriren würde, so furchtbar sei der Trieb, auch den grössten Unsinn zu begehen.

It may be conceded that in an essay on Hypnotism, the French phrase *Suggestions à échéance* is appropriate by reason of its technical significance. Still we ask where is the necessity for *intelligent, suggestible, absolut, suggeriren*? Why was the verb *zu begehen* tautologically repeated in so short a sentence? Why could not a little pains have been bestowed on bettering the lame amorphous clauses on which it limps to a conclusion?

German prose, except in the case of a few rare stylists, suffers from unwieldiness, cumbrous

It may be urged that these abominations are only discoverable in journalistic jargon. But newspapers form the principal literature of the middle and lower classes. Thus this commercial *patois* infiltrates common speech, and renders the talk of all but highly polished people insufferable. If we have to seek a valid excuse for the prevalent vulgarity of German prose, it should, perhaps, be found in the social backwardness of the German people. They need expressions which have become current through the usage of more cultivated nations, especially the French, and which carry connotations hitherto denied to their own Gothic vocabulary.

garrulity, circumlocution, and painfully prolonged suspension of thought through labyrinths of qualifying clauses, parentheses, and otiose excrescences. But there is another aspect of the literature. In poetry and in simple narration it is not easy to match its spontaneous and artless beauties. Heine's lyrics, for example, have a lightness of touch, a purity of phrase, an irreproducible grace of rhythm and haunting melody, the exact parallel to which can nowhere else be found. The same qualities are noticeable in the Märchen and in tales which have been written in their manner. Sincere homeliness, deep, true emotion, penetrating to the root and marrow of the human heart, kindness and honesty combined with shrewdness and a broad calm survey of the world, are the notes of this part of German literature. No other modern idiom has a set of words like *Gemüth*, *Innigkeit*, *fromm*, *bieder*, *hold*, expressive of the most lovable qualities of character. Their exact equivalents cannot be found in English, French, Italian. There is something idiosyncratic to German emotion and to German spiritual temperament in their form and sound.

VIII.

English is the most composite of modern languages, including as it does Teutonic, Celtic, Latin, and French elements in the body of the

idiom. It is also reduced to the simplest grammatical form. Nouns are not declined; genders, except for persons, have been discarded; verbs are conjugated mainly by the help of auxiliaries. To say that English has no grammar would be an exaggeration. But it certainly has less of grammar than any other literary language.

The variety of its vocabulary and the simplicity of its grammar are two main advantages of English, rendering it full of verbal suggestiveness and manageable as an instrument of expression. Among its prominent drawbacks may be reckoned imperfect (though copious) vowel-sounds, the frequency of sibilants, and the wearisome recurrence of little words like *the, a, which, that, of*. Glad as we may be for many reasons to have abolished the genders of sexless things, we cannot but feel that a certain loss is involved in this simplification. Declined substantives, adjectives, articles, relatives, participles, animate the diction of both poetry and prose, and help to determine the logical order of sentences by means of their terminal forms.

Owing to the complicated pedigree of the English language, our metrical systems offer insurmountable difficulties to the analyst. We have to deal with verse which depends for its effect on accent rather than quantity, and in which two traditions—that of Anglo-Saxon rhythm and that of classical scansion by feet—have become

inextricably intertwined. In addition to these double influences, the old alliterative forms of poetry demand attention. The ear in English versification is still reminiscent of lines which were governed by consonants repeated in emphatic places of the metre. Blank verse of highly elaborated structure combines three factors (native rhythm, classical scansion, and alliterative appeal to the sense of recurrent consonantal sounds) in proportions varying with the poet's aim or instinct. It is impossible to analyse the versification of Milton's "*Paradise Lost*" wholly by the laws of Greek and Latin prosody. It is equally impossible to explain it, as Dr. Guest in his learned treatise on English Rhythms would have us do, by reference only to the sections and the pauses of Anglo-Saxon measures. The peculiar charm of Miltonic blank verse is due to the admixture of both systems in a hybrid peculiar to England after the introduction of humanistic studies. Again, it is impossible to overlook the deliberate alliteration of such lines as the following :

Far off from these a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.

The flexibility of English renders our versification not unlike that of the Greeks. It is true that the

uncertainty of our syllabic utterance, and the insensibility of our ear to quantitative values, preclude us from acclimatising metres (like the hexameter), which depend upon dactyls and spondees. Yet the iambic and trochaic measures of dramatic dialogue in Attic Greek and in English, owing to the way in which both languages blend short and long words, are closely similar. Take this example :

Ah, dear Juliet,
 Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
 That unsubstantial death is amorous,
 And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
 For fear of that, I still will stay with thee:
 And never from this palace of dim night
 Depart again: here, here will I remain
 With worms that are thy chamber-maids: O, here
 Will I set up my everlasting rest,
 And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
 From this world-wearied flesh.

Some of the loveliest effects in English poetry are obtained by the artful use of monosyllables :

Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all!
 What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?
 No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call:
 All mine was thine before thou hadst this more.

Some of its most striking rhetorical effects depend upon a single polysyllabic word set at the right point in a rush of monosyllables :

Can man by no means creep out of himself,
 And leave the slough of viperous grief behind?

An English poet is compelled to get value out of the short words in which our language abounds. According to his use of them, the line may run like :

Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts,

or may linger like :

Showers, hails, snows, frosts, and two-edged winds that prime ;
for short words in English, according to their weight and volume, either wing the verse with feathers, or encumber it with chains of lead.

The hybrid nature of English prosody renders emphasis a main feature of our versification. Accentual rhythm formed the original and native groundwork of English prosody. This soon began to be modified by scansion. Learned poets, familiar with the quantitative systems of antiquity, allowed their ear to be governed in the act of composition by memories of Greek or Latin metres. Yet exactitude in the quantitative structure even of iambics has not been insisted on, and consequently the most remarkable effects may be produced in English by violations of classical rules which would have made an Attic audience shudder. No other literature more often illustrates than ours the metrical and rhetorical importance of a word placed so as to surprise the hearer's sense or to arrest his attention by some bold irregularity. Notice the value of the verb *streams* in this line of Marlowe :

See where Christ's blood streams in the firmament.

English prose is also hybrid ; but in some respects the amalgam has not been made so successfully as in the case of poetry. Starting with the simplicity of Anglo-Saxon and early English style, where the leading characteristics of our syntax are already defined, prose underwent a thorough French remodelling during the reigns of the Norman and Angevine monarchs. The result of this first period of fusion is visible in the style of Sir Thomas Malory's "*Morte d'Arthur* ;" it may be illustrated by the passage in which King Arthur departs for his last journey across the waters of the west :

"Now put me into the barge," said the king ; and so he did softly ; and there received him three queens with great mourning, and so those three queens set them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head. And then that queen said, "Ah ! dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me ? Alas ! this wound on your head hath taken over much cold." And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him ; then Sir Bedivere cried, "Ah ! my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies ?" "Comfort thyself," said King Arthur, "and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in ; for I will into the vale of Avilion for to heal me of my grievous wound ; and if thou never hear more of me, pray for my soul." But evermore the queens and ladies wept and shrieked that it was pity for to hear them. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost sight of the barge, he wept and wailed ; and so he went all the night, and in the morning he was ware between two hills of a chapel and a hermitage.

Translation played a very important part in the moulding of English literature. The "*Morte d'Arthur*" was avowedly a condensed version of several French romances, executed at a time when French had hardly ceased to be the language of the Court and law. During the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the English Bible assumed that shape which is familiar to every one in the old authorised version. It was the translation of books already well known through the Latin of the Vulgate; and though the translators went at first hand to the original languages of both Old and New Testaments, their choice of rhythm, phrase, and vocable was to a great extent determined by Jerome's example.

Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up
the ghost when I came out of the belly?

Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I
should suck?

For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should
have slept: then had I been at rest,

With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built
desolate places for themselves;

Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with
silver:

Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants
which never saw light.

There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the
weary be at rest.

The mixture of native with French or Latin words

—with *present, quiet, counsellor, desolate, prince, infant, cease*—has been accomplished; but the syntax still retains its early English simplicity.

While the Bible was circulating among the people through the medium of the press, England awoke to the new learning, and submitted to the charm of Italian humanism. A third process of fusion now further modified our prose style. Writers, belonging for the most part to the scholarly classes, began to use their mother-tongue according to the rules of Latin syntax. They did not merely transplant a multitude of Latin nouns, adjectives, and verbs with slight terminal alteration into the vocabulary. In so far as they did so they were only continuing the process already at work in the style of the Bible. But they also constructed periodic sentences, and built up paragraphs in the manner of the Roman rhetoricians. It would be interesting to trace the development of this humanistic use of language through Bacon, Jonson, Burton, Chillingworth, Sir Thomas Browne, and Jeremy Taylor. These masters of English prose were obeying an instinct somewhat similar to that which moved the poets in their attempt to assimilate English verse rhythms to classical metres. But the language did not lend itself kindly to the periodic structure they affected. What had been done in Latin by means of terminal forms—declined nouns and adjectives, inflected verbs, genders—

those natural artifices of the tongue, which secured lucid and logical arrangement in the most complicated windings of a sentence—had now to be attempted by linking together and interconnecting the short phrases which are proper to the genius of English. Consequently, those labyrinthine edifices seem to be compact of loosely welded parts, not wrought into a vitally organic whole. The incoherence and awkwardness of humanistic prose in England reach their climax in some of Milton's cumbersome periods. Sentence, sub-sentence, parenthesis, qualifying clause, are only kept together by a liberal expenditure of what may be described as verbal hooks and eyes. This passage on Marriage from the "Doctrine of Divorce" illustrates the intricacy of Milton's style, together with its rhetorical sublimity :

Marriage is a covenant the very being whereof consists in unfeigned love and peace ; and of matrimonial love, no doubt but that was chiefly meant which by the ancient sages was thus parabled : that Love, if he be not twin-born, yet hath a wondrous brother like him, called Anteros, whom while he seeks all about, his chance is to meet with many false and feigning desires, that wander singly up and down in his likeness. By them, in their borrowed garb, Love, though not wholly blind, as Poets wrong him, yet having but one eye, as being an archer aiming, and that eye not the quickest in this dark region here below, which is not Love's proper sphere, partly out of the simplicity and credulity which is natural to him, often deceived, embraces and consorts him with the obvious and suborned striplings, as if they were his mother's own sons, for so he

thinks them. But after a while, as his manner is, when soaring up into the high tower of his Apogæum, above the shadow of the earth, he darts out the rays of his most piercing eyesight, upon the impostures and trim disguises that were used with him, and discerns that this is not his genuine brother, as he imagined: he has no longer the power to hold fellowship with such a personated mate; for straight his arrows lose their golden heads and shed their purple feathers, his silken braids untwine, and slip their knots, and that original and fiery virtue given him by Fate all on a sudden goes out, and leaves him undeified and despoiled of all his force; till, finding Anteros at last, he kindles and repairs the almost faded ammunition of his deity, by the reflection of a co-equal and homogeneal fire. Thus mine author sung it to me; and by the leave of those who would be counted the only grave ones, this is no mere amatorious novel (though to be wise and skilful in these matters, men, heretofore of greatest name in virtue, have esteemed it one of the highest arcs that human contemplation, circling upwards, can make from the globy sea whereon she stands): but this is a deep and serious verity, showing that love in marriage cannot live nor subsist unless it be mutual.

If we inquire what English prose gained in this humanistic period, we shall find that the range and compass of the language were widely extended, that new and richer rhythms were added to its cadences, and that its capacity for the construction of majestic monumental sentences was proved.

There are sicknesses that walk in darkness; and there are exterminating angels, that fly wrapt up in the curtains of immateriality and an uncommunicating nature; whom we cannot see, but we feel their force, and sink under their sword; and from heaven the veil descends that wraps our heads in the fatal sentence.

It was surely a great gain to have learned to write thus with Jeremy Taylor, or as thus with Thomas Browne :

But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnising nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature.

In our English literature, the language of poetry has never differed essentially from the language of prose. Think of Jonson's, Milton's, Dryden's use of both. Think of the simultaneous revival of Elizabethan wealth and colour in the diction of both poetry and prose during the nineteenth century. Yet English has been, upon the whole, most successfully handled for the purposes of verse. That is due, I think, partly to the genius of the idiom and its literary history, partly to the attitude of writers. The simplicity of our grammar, combined with the richness and variety of our vocabulary, renders the language specially fit for poetic utterance, where the phrase is always brief and vibrating ; less fit for organised and periodic eloquence, to which it was so ruthlessly adapted by the humanistic stylists. The humanists improved versification by their sympathy with classic metre. They went near to ruining prose by their imitation of Latin syntactical forms, and checked the natural evolution of our *oratio soluta* on the lines of early French. Something has always remained of lumbering and slipshod in the struc-

ture of long English sentences. Authors, who had no skill in building up periods like Taylor's or Browne's, thought themselves justified by those eminent examples in floundering through jungles of plethoric phrases loosely tacked together by conjunctions.

The incoherence of bad English prose is only less desolating than that of common German prose. I will illustrate my meaning by examples of slipshod, clumsy, or obscure sentences extracted from the published essays of the late Mark Pattison. I choose him because he is upon the whole a vigorous writer, and because he was invariably a severe critic—merciless to those who fell short of an ideal of scholarship which he had formed. It is difficult to believe, however, that the man who wrote as follows, can have thought with the exactitude pertaining to true scholarship.

In England it was known from Poggio's report in 1418 that no inedited new classics were to be hoped for.*

What Pattison has said here is that the English, after Poggio's report in 1418, did not expect the discovery of any fresh and inedited classics. What he meant to say was, that no such classics were to be hoped for in England.

The conflicting claims of his Muse and a fiery Turk which he had bought at the Frankfort fair had once liked to have proved fatal to him.†

* "Pattison's Essays," vol. i. p. 91.

† Ibid., p. 98.

This is awkward and of doubtful grammar, as is also the following from the same paragraph :

Perhaps we have to thank the road for a good deal more than we often think of the ocean of mediocre Latin verse which the sixteenth century bequeathed to us.

To any one who is at all an artist in language, a sentence so cacophonously crowded with four *thats* as the one which I shall now quote, gives absolute pain : *

We are not quite sure that that Father is not giving us Tolleus amplified with that latitude of invention which local history at that period allowed itself.

The next specimen contains two of the commonest and vulgarest faults of slipshod English : †

Of the period of thirty years, 1563–1594, not more than half was actually spent by Scaliger under his patron's roof. But *it* was always open to him, and his books and papers—his only property—seem to have been deposited in one of *his* Poitevin châteaux.

The *it* and *his* which I have italicised, are the peccant parts of this intolerable sentence. A roof ought never to be open ; and it would have been no advantage to Scaliger should he have been always able to reckon upon finding an open roof in his patron's mansion. After the repeated *him*, *his*, and *his*, the third *his* both logically and grammatically refers to Scaliger. Yet the brain,

* "Pattison's Essays," vol. i. p. 110. † Ibid., p. 139.

tortured by reiteration, eventually relegates it to the patron who kept a portion of his roof always open for a scholar guest.

The following sentence might be proposed as a puzzle to schoolboys. Examine and analyse its structure. You will find it difficult to determine whether Scaliger or Muretus was the old friend and the guest : *

In September, 1562, Muretus came to France, and as an old friend of his father, Julius Cæsar Scaliger, and his guest at Agen, Joseph was as much with him as Muret's only occasional visits to Paris from Charlieu made possible.

Take the next, and explain to which of the plurals in this proposition the italicised word *their* should logically be referred : †

Not so many places were ravaged by the Protestants as suffered from the Catholic troops, but as many or more in proportion to *their* numbers.

I have chosen these instances of slovenly writing almost at random from Mr. Pattison's justly famous Quarterly articles on the Stephensens and Scaliger, and from the fragment of his "Life of Joseph Scaliger." They show that in England even a thinker so vigorous, a man of learning so exact, and a critic so scrupulous as the late Rector of Lincoln College, is capable of ignoring the graces of form, and violating the rules of language. Mr.

* "Pattison's Essays," vol. i. p. 206. † Ibid., p. 235.

Pattison pours contempt on French *schön-geisterei*, girds at the shallowness of Italian erudition, and utters the astonishing paradox that "disgust at pedantry prevents French writing from ever rising above the level of good drawing-room conversation."* Yet when he uses his own mother-tongue, he blunders into linguistic errors, which would have brought the ferule of the pedagogue down with force upon the knuckles of Poliziano, and which M. Nisard would have accounted more discreditable than a false quantity. If learning, long study of the Greek and Latin classics, and the aristocratic habit of mind, which lends an almost arrogant hauteur to this exacting scholar, could not preserve him from such ugly vulgarisms, we have the right to demand more of *schön-geisterei* and less of scientific pedantry.

Less attention has hitherto been paid to prose in England than to poetry. Spontaneity and freedom—I had almost written insubordination—are distinctive notes of the English literary spirit. We do not readily submit to the discipline of academies or the dictates of arch-critics. We are intolerant of rules, and jealous lest so-called "correction" should impair the native force of the idiom. What genius and instinct enable us to do, is done vigorously and well. Therefore poetry, being, as Mr. M. Arnold observed, mainly a matter of genius,

* "Pattison's Essays," vol. i. p. 116.

has thriven in our island ; and without self-laudation we can challenge all literatures, except perhaps the Greek, to match the English in this field. But the rhythms, the cadences, the necessary limitations, the specific graces of prose style, considered as a branch of literary art, have been neglected. Few people who read English prose reflect upon the manner of a writer. They are satisfied if they can grasp his meaning, and require from him no more, being apparently unconscious of the psychological relation between thought and its expression. Much has still to be done by us before the just medium between bald, breathless propositions and cumbrous, long-winded periods shall be reached. The elasticity, the vivid clarity of phrase, the distinction of each several proposition, which characterise the more felicitously developed organ of written speech in France, have yet to be attained by us. It might almost be asserted that we are at present as far behind the French as the Germans are behind ourselves in the art of average prose.

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